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INTRODUCTION

● 114 It is very remarkable that Indian administrators and British anthropologists should have had to wait a century for any detailed authoritative account of the Gonds of Central India. It may also be said to have been very unfortunate that we should have had to wait so long, though that misfortune is much mitigated by the excellence of the monographs that we have just received from Verrier Elwin and, in particular, from Mr. Grigson. What one regrets most is that an earlier study of the Gonds might have prevented much suffering and many misfortunes, at least, that is, if it had led to the taking of measures in their interests such as Mr. Grigson was able to initiate in Bastar State during the term of his office there as Administrator and Diwan.

It is hardly necessary for me to say anything of Mr. Grigson's qualifications for writing of the Maria Gonds of that State: those qualifications will be self-evident to the discerning reader of the book which follows. But it should be placed on record that Mr. Grigson has succeeded in initiating measures to restore the jurisdiction of village *panchayats*, to restrict the alienation of villages to foreigners from outside by abolishing the *thekadari* system, to put an end to oppressive and vexatious interference by police and other petty officials with the life of the Maria village. For it is the very high privilege of that altogether too rare individual the anthropologically-minded administrative officer, that he can often bring practical benefits to the subjects of his studies as well as informative benefits to the readers he instructs.

It is obvious that this monograph on the Gonds of Bastar reveals a fusion of cultures which has not only taken place in the past but is going on in the present. The author himself draws attention to the difference between the cultures of the Bison-horn and of the Abujhmar Marias, and ascribes them to successive waves of Gond immigrants, as well as to the more recent encroachments of Hinduism. But this is not the whole of the picture, and without 000 offering any attempt at an analysis of the Bastar cultures it is perhaps permissible to point out certain parallels and to suggest an inference or two. Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, dealing in Appendix V with the physical side of the Gond problem, suggests the existence of three elements, a pre-Dravidian element conveniently labelled 'proto-australoid' by Sewell and Veddaic by others—Eickstedt calls it 'Veddid'—which is dolichocephalic, prognathous and

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PREFACE

THE Administration of Bastar State has generously subsidized the publication of this book, and for this practical sympathy I must thank Colonel Meek, the Agent to the Governor-General for the Eastern States, and Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., Administrator of Bastar State. I hope that it will not be the last book to be written about the Marias. More systematic field-work will without doubt correct and supplement many of my statements; I shall be content if my book tempts any trained worker to visit the ethnologically unexplored lands of Bastar and Jeypore.

My four years as Administrator of Bastar State kept me busy in camp and office with administrative problems of all kinds. The primary object of my enquiries was to ascertain grievances, especially those caused by the adoption in a primitive State of criminal, civil and revenue laws framed for British Indian districts some centuries more 'advanced'. In getting the aboriginal to show me his house and his possessions, in watching his domestic and agricultural routine, and in attending his simple social and religious ceremonies I found the readiest path to his confidence and to appreciation of his real feelings about the administration. Question begat counter-question, and attempts to explain the domestic life of the English to Marias were interesting and amusing. If because I was primarily an administrator I have sometimes dwelt at length on administrative problems, I do not repent: for, despite such views as those advanced by Mr. N. M. Joshi and Mr. M. S. Aney in the Indian Legislative Assembly debate of February 18th, 1936, on the areas to be wholly or partially excluded under the recent Government of India Act, when they heartily damned all anthropologists as wishing to keep the primitive races of India 'uncivilized' and 'in a state of barbarism' as raw material for their science and 'in order to add to their blessed stock of scientific knowledge', anthropology has a very practical value to all charged with the administration of other races if it can discover the thoughts and need of those races. The results of the divorce of administration from anthropology as seen in the system of land revenue, police and judicial administration applied to the Maria tracts of Bastar have been as strikingly revealed on a larger scale by the post-1919 attempts in Bombay and the Central Provinces to force prohibition upon the Bhil, the Gond and the Korku.

Few now are the regions of India where the white man is unknown, and fewer still those in which the Hindu has not yet

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settled. The Hill Maria and part of the Bison-horn Maria country are such regions; and often in our stay in Bastar my wife and I were able to recapture something of the surprise and variety of experience that our pioneer ancestors knew so much more than their descendants of these humdrum and standardized days. This alone would justify some record of what we saw.

For encouragement to attempt such a record I must first thank His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler, K.C.S.I., C.B., C.I.E., C.V.O., C.B.E., now Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man, for nine years Governor of the Central Provinces and in political charge of the Central Provinces States, to whom I owed my appointment as Administrator of Bastar, and who was the wisest and most helpful of chiefs and the best and most stimulating of friends. Mr. R. A. Wilson, who was then Chief Secretary to the Government of the Central Provinces, wrote to me suggesting a study of the Marias even before I went to Bastar. I am very grateful also for the advice and encouragement of three friends: Dr. J. H. Hutton, C.I.E., I.C.S., the last Census Commissioner for India, who has put me further in his debt by reading through my manuscript and contributing so interesting an Introduction; Baron Egon von Eickstedt, Professor of Ethnology at Breslau University, who visited Bastar while I was there and has kindly allowed me to reproduce some of his excellent photographs; and the Right Reverend Alex Wood, D.D., O.B.E., Lord Bishop of Nagpur, the doyen of Gondi scholars and sanest of critics. My interest in the Gond, first aroused by contact with him in the Nagpur, Seoni and Hoshangabad districts, was stimulated by early talks with Mr. C. G. Chenevix Trench, C.I.E., then serving in the Central Provinces Commission, the author of a fascinating Gondi grammar and of certain contributions to Blackwood which vividly portray the Indian aboriginal, and by that mine of ethnological material, Russell and Hiralal's *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*. I have in the succeeding pages often disagreed with their statements on Marias in their article 'Gond'; but theirs was a pioneer work, being largely a compilation of statements gleaned from a mass of papers contributed by officials, pleaders and others, supplemented by the personal enquiries of the authors and their wide knowledge of almost all that had been previously written on their subjects. Mistakes and mis-statements were thus inevitable; but their great book is remarkable for its general reliability, its sustained interest and its power of stimulating further investigation.

I must state how I made my enquiries. Throughout my time in Bastar I kept notes and took photographs of what I heard or saw. Between 1927 and 1931 I made four long tours among the Hill

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Marias, and paid several shorter visits to the fringes of their hills; since 1931 I have three times revisited Bastar, seeing some Marias each time, and spending March 1934 in revisiting the Abujhmar hills villages seen in my 1929-31 tours, and the Bison-horn Maria villages above and below the Aranpur pass. I had similarly often toured before across the Bison-horn Maria country, and made many friends among the villages around the Bailadila hills, which, in return for a reduced assessment of land revenue, had the duty of sending relays of men up to the hills during the summer recess there of the Ruling Chief and leading State officials.

Notes and Queries on Anthropology, published by the Royal Anthropological Institute, was of constant value, even though, as explained in Chapter XIII, the poor memories of the Marias prevented me from getting the results expected from the geneological method. My work made it impossible for me to be in Maria villages at all seasons and to see all Maria ceremonies, and therefore I supplemented my enquiries by getting detailed reports from selected State officials whom I tried to train roughly for this by taking them with me during my personal enquiries on tour. I have almost always checked their reports by personal investigation; and in the few cases where I could not so check them, I have repeated nothing reported by them unless it was confirmed by the independent reports of two or more other reliable observers. These enquiries did impose much extra work on them, but gave them a much-needed knowledge of the aboriginal and did much to raise the morale and co-operation of the enquirers and to raise the standard of the administration. I could not have had a happier and friendlier family of colleagues than those of all ranks who served under me my last two years in the State. All were helpful, but especially Pandit Ghasiram Dane, then a subdivisional officer, the late Mr. H. N. Dutt, then tahsildar of Dantewara, since a victim of blackwater fever, Mr. Niranjan Singh, then tahsildar of Bijapur and manager of Kutru, now Assistant Administrator, Mr. Sant Prasad, formerly tahsildar of Konta, Circle Inspector Manbahal Singh of the State Police, and Mr. Dikshitulu of the State Medical Service, who did remarkable anti-yaws work in the Abujhmar hills in my second tour and in later independent tours.

Language was always a difficulty. Halbi is the *lingua franca* of Bastar. The differences between Maria dialects are great, and the very guttural hill dialect is so unintelligible to the Bison-horn Marias that at their rare meetings they communicate with Hill Marias through those of them who understand Halbi. And there are many variations of both the Hill and the Bison-horn Maria dialects. Of Halbi, everyone serving in Bastar must acquire some

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Bastar, and learned later from the Maratha *amil* of Deolmari that he had retired only just in time, as word had been passed from zamindar to zamindar in Bastar to combine to plunder his party. Unless there has been since then a wide displacement of population—which is quite possible in view of the chronic mismanagement of the Bhopalpatnam and Kutru zamindaris of Bastar—it is unlikely that his assailants were Abujhmar or Bison-horn Marias or Koyas; they were probably members of the gangs of ruffians at that time maintained by all the petty chieftains of the Godavari valley, or else Gonds of the type known in that part of Bastar to the Telugus as Dorla, probably Bison-horn Marias who, on descending to the Godavari valley, had come into contact with the outside world. This Maratha Amil, in congratulating Blunt on his escape from the mountains and jungles in which several of the Amil's men had been lost, added some remarks about the men of the jungle which rightly gave the wandering Banjara the credit of being the first civilizing influence in Bastar; his remarks, with the necessary modifications, are certainly true of a later period in the Abujhmar hills and the wilder parts of Central Bastar. He represented the Banjaras as having done much to conciliate and partially civilize the 'Gonds', 'for the traffic which they carry on among them, particularly in salt and sugar, had introduced a taste for luxuries, which many of them now could not easily dispense with. This had also induced them to be more industrious in collecting the produce of their jungles, such as lac, iron ore, and other articles for barter, and had necessitated their affording protection to the Brinjaries (*sic*). In the course of this traffic, which had now lasted about twenty-five years, the desire of the Goands (*sic*) for salt and sugar had considerably increased, and tended more to their civilization than any other means: for before they had tasted or acquired a relish for these articles, no man could venture among them; and he assured me that it had a more powerful effect than the whole force of the Mahratta arms in rendering them obedient to their government.'

The first Europeans actually to visit Bastar seem to have been Captain Fenwick in 1850 and Mr. Take in 1855; they made only short trips up a portion of the Kolab-Sabari river that forms for many miles the eastern boundary of Bastar. I have not seen their reports. Captain MacVicar's brief visit early in 1855 and the important visit of Colonel (then Lieut.) C. Elliot, the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, later that year have been mentioned above in the footnote on human sacrifice. Elliot's report was reprinted in 1861 as 'Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXX. Report on the Bustar and Kharonde Dependencies of the Raepore District'. He

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entered Bastar from Sihawa in the south of the Raipur district, near the trijunction of Raipur, Kanker and Bastar, marched south-east to Jagdalpur and thence to Dantewara, leaving all the zamindari country south of Dantewara and the Abujhmar hills and the present Antagarh tahsil untouched. His report gives some details of the races in the State, much of which, however, repeats obvious *omne ignotum pro magnifico* tales of local Hindus; but he saw nothing of the Abujhmar hills, and, though he visited Dantewara, little of the Bison-horn Marias of that tahsil. He was, on the whole, more interested in the economic and administrative problems of Bastar than in its people. There was also a visit at about this time by Captain Stewart, Explorer of Forests, while in 1855 and 1856 respectively Lieut. Goddard and Lieut. (afterwards Major-General) F. T. Haig explored the Godavari valley in the investigation of Sir A. Cotton's ambitious but largely abortive scheme for making the Godavari and its affluent the Wardha river navigable from Wardha to the sea. Haig's Report on the Navigability of the River Godavari was published at Madras in 1856; I have found also at p. 357 of the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876, an allusion to a report of a visit by him, when a Colonel, to Jagdalpur; but I have been unable to obtain copies of either report, though both are said to contain ethnographic notes.

The most valuable and thorough of the early reports, especially from the ethnographic point of view, is that of Captain C. L. R. Glasfurd, Deputy Commissioner of the former Sironcha District and Political Agent for Bastar, published in 1863 in No. XXXIX of *Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department*. He spent much of the touring seasons of 1861 and 1862 in Bastar, and was probably the first European to visit the then numerous zamindaris of the south, certainly the first to explore any part of the Abujhmar hills. His report is the entire source of the article on Bastar in Grant's 1870 *Central Provinces Gazetteer*, and many of his statements are repeated, unfortunately not always in their true context, in the article 'Gond' in Russell and Hiralal, Vol. III. In February 1930 I found his name still remembered as Gilaspat Sahib in two Abujhmar villages which did not appear to have been visited in the interval by any other European. An example of his accuracy is that he noted the distinction between the Marias of the Abujhmar, whom he termed Marees, and the Marias of Jagdalpur, Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils, whom he termed Marias, but who are known to some of the Abujhmar Marias as Dandami Marias and are generally referred to in this book as Bison-horn Marias. His visit laid the lines of the future policy of the Central Provinces Administration in Bastar State, and it is

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worth while to reproduce some of his concluding remarks in paragraph 175 of the report :— 175 114

'In most English Maps "unexplored territory" is inscribed on the very centre of the Dependency; while the best Indian Map by Colonel Scott, Quarter-Master General of the Madras Presidency, gives but few details, and those few incorrect. The country, it will be perceived, is an interminable forest, with the exception of a small cultivated tract around Jugdalpore, intersected by high mountain ranges, which present serious obstacles to traffic. Its insalubrity is proverbial; the inhabitants are composed of rude, uncivilised tribes of Gonds; in some parts almost savages, who shun contact with strangers, have but few wants which they cannot supply themselves; honest and interesting to the Ethnologist perhaps, but a race who prefer the solitude of forests to the bustle of towns, and the freedom of the savage to all the allurements and comforts of civilization. With such a country and such inhabitants, rapid progress and improvement cannot be looked for; and any efforts to open out the Dependency, with the hope of immediately stimulating trade, or rather creating it where it never existed, would end in disappointment. Our efforts for the present should be to open up a few important lines on which traffic already exists, and to ameliorate the condition of the people by the introduction of a better system of criminal and judicial procedure than that at present in force at Jugdalpore, and, above all, by opening up the Sironcha District, which intervenes between Bustar and the Godavery. The opening up of this river will do more to improve the condition of the Bustar Dependency than the most elaborate system of roads would without it. A demand would be created, which would send traders into parts they never ventured before, and the inhabitants would receive cloth, salt, tobacco and other articles in exchange for their rice, lakh, wax, etc., in the interior. The fact is that the Dependency must be civilised, and the improvement to be material and lasting must have the navigable Godavery and the districts on its banks as its base line; the former once open, and the latter profiting by the facilities of communication with the coast, the bars to civilization in Bustar will soon be broken down, and that from the direction of the Godavery. In the meantime, however, the road carried on by the Madras Government as far as Jeypore should be opened out to Jugdalpore, and eventually thence to Sironcha; and the great Brinjara route from the southern portions of the Raepore District, which passes through a part of Bustar, should also be cleared. These, with vaccination and the introduction of copper coin, might be at once commenced, and subsequently other steps as they suggest themselves. The Police now distributed over the Dependency will also be of great use in gradually accustoming the people to us, and the location of a news-writer at Jugdalpore would be attended with equally good results.'

As the Maratha Amil sixty-seven years before, so now the Victorian Englishman; develop trade, and civilization would follow. The isolation of centuries was to end, Bastar to be opened to the world by land and by water, and its 'savages' to exchange their freedom for 'the allurements and comforts of civilization', trade and traders, clothes, tobacco, a better system of criminal and judicial procedure, vaccination and copper coin. Did, and do, the ghosts of the old builders of the ruins of Barsur, Bhairamgarh and Kuruspal smile to hear a newer race decree that 'Bastar must be civilized!'?

A land free from rules and regulations and a race that had no use for copper coin did not square with that passion for uniformity

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Chapter III

The Ethnological Setting; the Primitive Races of Bastar

It remains in this chapter, before passing on to the main subject of this book, to outline the distribution of races in Bastar and to some extent in adjacent districts; the major political divisions of India seldom correspond to racial divisions, and each of the main races of Bastar overflows into other provinces or States. This discord between political and racial divisions has not made it easier for students to understand the ethnography of this part of India. An area mainly peopled by primitive Mundari or Dravidian speaking tribes of similar customs, rites and manners extends from the Santal country on the borders of Bengal and Bihar, through Chhota Nagpur and the Orissa States into the Central Provinces and the old Central Provinces States, of which Bastar was the chief, into the Jeypore zamindari now included in the new Orissa province, the East Godavari Agency of Madras, and beyond the Godavari into Hyderabad State. Hitherto the area has been divided administratively between the local governments of four provinces and one major State, Bengal, Madras, the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, and Hyderabad; the many Orissa and Central Provinces States were under the control of the governments of Bihar and Orissa, and of the Central Provinces, so that the student has been spared separate census reports and ethnographic surveys for them. Even so, there have been four census reports and three provincial publications on tribes and castes from which to glean the required information; perhaps the formation of the new Eastern States Agency and the separate province of Orissa will mean two more census reports in 1941. To make matters worse, there is confusion of names; the Parja of Bastar becomes Poroja in Madras official language, and the Bhattra becomes Bottada. The Gond, wherever he speaks his own language, from Central India to the Eastern Ghats and Hyderabad, calls himself Koi or Koitor; yet only in Madras and Hyderabad reports is he called by a name approaching this in sound, Koya, and in the literature of the Central Provinces there has therefore been a tendency to restrict this name to Teluguized members of the race. Everywhere it is more usual to call primitive tribes by the local Hindu name for them, and not by their own name for themselves. So over much of India the prevailing Hindu name Gond, and not Koi, is used; and with his usual passion for standardization the

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114 official in India has tried gradually to call all the Koitor race Gonds, whatever the name by which they call themselves or the local vernacular name for them, and even to include under the generic term Gond other races or tribes who are not Koitor but only resemble them more or less in their customs. All the Koitor of Bastar have thus been officially classed as Gonds, though the name Gond is still hardly known in Bastar and is regarded by most Koitor of every local variety as an insult, except by Hinduized Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. If official and ethnographer would always use the names by which tribesmen call themselves when speaking their own language, we should possibly find many of the so-called branches of the primitive races not branches at all, but merely classified as such in the past owing to unintelligent failure to realize that in different tracts different Hindus have used different names for the same race or tribe.

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The difficulty is accentuated by the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names. So arise such names as Raj-Gond, Raj-Korku, Raja-Muria, Naik Gond, Pit-Bhattra; and it will be seen below how this process has worked in Bastar.

Almost a reverse process is also at work, by which the remnants of forgotten tribes or old confederations of tribes not necessarily akin or speaking the same language have long been known under the common name applied to the whole confederation. The links that used to hold them together disappear, and those sections of the confederation that are socially or culturally more advanced object to being dragged down to the same level in popular esteem as the backward sections, and so prefer to abandon the name given to the confederation in favour of the original or some new name of their own section. The Parjas are a clear example of this, as beyond the Jeypore border they include at least seven different tribes, some speaking Munda, some Dravidian and some Aryan dialects, which differ widely in customs and degree of advancement: the Bastar Parjas except, it is said, the few wilder ones beyond the Kolab-Sabari in Sukma zamindari and around Mount Tulsidongri in Sukma and Jagdalpur tahsil, now invariably call themselves Dhurwa and resent being called Parja. The name Parja appears to be only a corruption of the Aryan term '*praja*' applied to subjects as distinct from the '*raja*' or ruler.

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It is difficult to give figures for the growth or decline of the tribes of Bastar, as the 1931 census was the first since 1891 in which almost all the primitive races of Bastar were not lumped together

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under the generic name Gond. In 1931 the tribes enumerated as Gonds in the previous three censuses were separately enumerated under the names Bhattra, Gond, Maria, Muria, Koya and Parja. The totals for these must be added both for 1931 and 1891 in order to see how far the primitive races of Bastar have been increasing. The 1921 figure for Gonds was only 107,503 persons, compared with 285,519 in 1911, and was obviously wrong; the 113,100 persons enumerated in 1921 under Minor Castes should be added to the 107,503 Gonds, though even then the total of 220,603 is below the correct figure. Excluding the Halbas and certain minor aboriginal tribes, the comparative figures are then :—

Year	Gonds
1891	128,442
1901	204,641
1911	285,519
1921	220,603
1931	359,637

The increase in forty years has been 181 per cent. In the same period the total population rose by 69 per cent. from 310,884 to 524,721. The primitive population is more than holding its own.

Halbas were also classified at the census, not altogether rightly, as primitive, and with them and certain other minor primitive tribes added, the primitive population rises to 379,082. Even this does not tell the full tale. Large numbers of the persons returned as members of the Hindu functional castes, the graziers, potters, fishermen, weavers (Mahras), blacksmiths and others, are in reality members of primitive tribes speaking their languages and only differentiated from them by their occupation. There is nothing in outward appearance to distinguish these persons from other aboriginals; they follow their tribal religions whether enumerated as such or as Hindus. I consider that on this account the 1931 primitive total can safely be regarded as 400,000, or 76 per cent.; the census report puts the percentage at 73·6.

The totals given for the tribes formerly treated as Gonds but separately enumerated in 1931 are :—

Bhattra	36,611
Gond	24,407
Maria	146,070
Muria	124,923
Koya	9,988
Parja	17,568

Unfortunately even now, as will be shown later, the classification has been over-simplified, and is of little use for scientific purposes. The only categories about which no doubt can arise are Bhattra

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and Parja, and it is therefore easy first of all to describe their distribution; only the briefest of general remarks will be made about them; I hope at a later date to publish a separate account, at least of the Parjas.

In the ethnographic map on page 40 the Bhattras are shown by the letter A and the Parjas by the letter B. The former

Bhattras and Parjas

alone among the races of Bastar have abandoned whatever Munda or Dravidian tongue they may have once spoken, and now use a corrupt Uriya dialect. In Bastar, except for one or two villages at the south-east corner of the Kondagaon tahsil, the Bhattras are confined to the north-east corner of Jagdalpur, along the Jeypore border, across which they overflow in large numbers into Jeypore and, beyond, Kalahandi State. Their Bastar number in 1891 was 21,477. The use of their language is spreading to other tribes, chiefly the Parjas; it was spoken by 45,830 persons in 1931, which means that 9,219 non-Bhattras speak it. The spread of its use among the Parjas is shown by the fact that only 12,363 Parji-speakers were returned out of 17,568 Parjas. Actually, as Sir George Grierson has admitted, Bhattri might as well be classified as one of the many forms of Halbi as a dialect of Uriya; to the outward ear they sound very similar, and the two languages are mutually intelligible. Halbi always varies according to its proximity to Chhattisgarhi, Telugu or Gondi; and to me Bhattri seems only Halbi influenced by its proximity to Uriya-speaking tracts. Nor are local census enumerators by any means to be relied upon effectively to distinguish Halbi and Bhattri. Grierson's remark of Gondi dialects that the names indicate tribal rather than linguistic differences is true of Halbi and Bhattri at all events.

The Bhattras live in open country with miles of good rice cultivation. They are gradually giving up even their very modified form of *dahya* or shifting cultivation, consisting now mainly of the occasional cutting and carting to their rice fields of forest undergrowth, and burning it there as manure. All but twenty-six of them were returned in 1931 as following their tribal religion; and this is really the correct account, though they are considerably more Hinduized than any other tribe classed as primitive in 1931 except the Halbas. The latter, whose religion preserves only slightly less of the tribal element than the Bhattra, are, however, in contrast, all but thirty-six recorded as Hindu. No anthropometric work has been done among the Bastar Bhattras; and there are no data for accepting or rejecting on physical grounds the Central Provinces habit of classifying them as a branch of the Gond race. Traditionally they came with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, while over

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101 'Seroncha Talook and Bhopalputnum, Veejapore, Chintulnar, Dunteewara, Kootroo and Barsoor Talooks of Bustar'; and for Marias 'Kootroo, Chintulnar, Dunteewara and Veejapore Talooks of Bustar, and also that part of Bustar called Ulrugmad[1]'. He notes that the Gotta language is nearly allied to the Maria. He uses [103] Telugu versions of Bastar place names, just as the Survey of India did in the old topographical survey maps; by Savery, Beejee, Potukul, Kotapilly, Veejapore and Soonkoom he meant Kolab-Sabari, Bhiji, Phutkel, Pamer-Kotapalli, Bijapur and Sukma. Bhiji is the old name of the south-eastern part of Konta tahsil; Phutkel is a former zamindari in the Talper riverain tract of Bijapur tahsil, while Chintulnar is now in Konta tahsil, occupying the tract at the foot of the Aranpur pass. Except, therefore, for his inclusion of Sukma in the region of the Koyas, his distribution of the 'Koys, Gottawars and Marias' corresponds very closely with the areas shown in the ethnographic map for Dorlas, mixed Maria-Dorla, and Marias; in his Report on the Dependency of Bastar he had stated that Marias constituted 90 per cent. of the population of Sukma.

●114 Various articles were published between 1876 and 1881 on the Koyas, whom he rightly calls Kois, by the Rev. John Cain, for many years a C.M.S. missionary at Dummagudem on the Godavari in the Bhadrachalam taluq of the East Godavari Agency, and only a few miles from the south-western corner of the Konta tahsil. These articles were the basis of the article on the Koyas in Thurston's *Tribes and Castes of Southern India*[2]. He wrote in the first of these:—

> 'I propose to notice first the Kois, a tribe already partially described in Captain Glasfurd's reports and Colonel Haig's report of his visit to Jagdalpur, and also in the Census Report for 1871 of the Madras Presidency. These people are to be found in the country extending from the banks of the Indravati, Bastar, down to the neighbourhood of Kammammet in the Nizam's country. All those in the plains have a tradition that about 100 years ago they were driven down from the plateau in the Bastar country by famine and disputes, and this relationship is also acknowledged by the Gutta Kois, i.e. the hill Kois who live in the highlands of Bastar. Up to the present (1876) time I have had but little intercourse with the Gutta Kois, and the manners and customs described in this paper will be those of the Kois dwelling in the Bhadrachallam taluka.'

Elsewhere he writes that the Gutta Koi of the Bastar plateau 'look down with some degree of contempt on the lowland Koi', who are

[1] An obvious misprint for 'Ubujmand', Glasfurd's spelling of Abujhmar.

[2] Cain's articles are:—'The Bhadrachallam Taluka, Godavari District, S. India', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876, p. 357 et seq.; 'The Bhadrachallam and Rekapalli Talugas', *ibidem*, Vol. VIII, 1879, p. 33 et seq., and p. 219 et seq.; Vol. X, 1881, p. 221 et seq.; 'The Koi, a Southern Tribe of the Gond', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal*, Vol. XIII, 1881, p. 410 et seq. There were others in certain missionary journals, which I could not trace.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Chapter XIII

Social Organization; the Phratries and Clans

114 The investigations that have resulted in the materials for this book have had perforce to be made piecemeal in the intervals of a busy administrative task. Here the professional ethnologist who is able to make a prolonged stay among the subjects of his studies has a profound advantage over the administrator; and in no direction is this advantage more pronounced than in tracing the ramifications of a system of social organization. Even where the genealogical method of enquiry can be profitably employed it is useless for this wide purpose, unless the collection of pedigrees and of information on laws and customs based upon them can be spread over as wide a field as possible. Apart from the lack of leisure from which an official administering a State so large and with such a tradition of personal rule as Bastar must suffer, there is a further difficulty [153] about genealogical enquiries, namely the poor memories of the Marias as to their ancestors, sometimes even as to their own parents and uncles. It is very seldom that anyone can remember the names of ancestors earlier than his grandparents; many cannot even remember their grandmother's name, much less her clan, unless the family has regularly followed the tradition of cross-cousin marriage. When, as among the Hill Marias, there is so little individual property to pass by inheritance, land being the property of the clan, cattle being scarce, and the contents of the houses being either food or not made of durable materials, some of which have to be buried with their owner or destroyed at his death, the genealogical method may not lead the enquirer very far. Very old men and women are, moreover, not common. The only pedigree covering more than three generations that I was able to collect is printed in Appendix II after the lists of clans. Two circumstances favoured it. There were two very old but intelligent men, Usendi Baiyya and Usendi Dangi, living when the pedigree was first taken in 1930; their nephew Usendi Moda, a man of unusual intelligence, was then about fifty, and all three had a good memory of the clans and villages with which the family had intermarried for three generations; even then Baiyya and Dangi could not remember their paternal grandmother's name or the clan and village from which

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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she came. The second circumstance was the fact that, to some extent, I could spur their memories from the record of a 1916 Sessions case in which Moda and two other members of the family had been sentenced to imprisonment for life for the murder of a fourth member, Usendi Bhosa. The family was, moreover, one of considerable social importance. It has the hereditary right of providing the secular headman of both the village of Orcha and the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, while the Usendi clan is one of the strongest in the Abujhmar hills, and the Koqsar festivals of its god Wikir Hunga attract people from far and wide. In most families it is impossible to get beyond the paternal grandfather, if indeed beyond the father and mother; but though the names are forgotten, obligations are not; and many, if not all, Marias remember the clans and families with which they have cross-cousin marriage alliances. Of 105 Hill Maria marriages investigated, fifty-seven were marriages between cross-cousins; it is not so easy to check the remaining 46 per cent. in which the marriage marked the start of new affinities, at least as between the two contracting families, if not as between the clans.

On the other hand, a man touring as the administrative head of the State has the advantage of always having many Marias from different clans and villages assembling at his camps, and so of ascertaining their matrimonial alliances and testing practically any clan lists which he may have made or obtained elsewhere. But here a further difficulty crops up. Communications among the Hill Marias are very bad, and it by no means follows that an Usendi living, let us say, on the southern edge of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* has the same views on the clans from which it is permissible to seek a bride as an Usendi in the Chanda part of the Abujhmar hills or in the northernmost Maria *pargana* of the Antagarh tahsil. There is always a tendency to limit clan jurisdiction to the administrative division; though investigation will reveal much intermarriage between one *pargana* and the next, even though one should be in one tahsil and the other in another, in a zamindari or even in British territory, yet the investigator will be assured that 'we do not take wives from that clan or village because it is not in our *pargana*' or 'our raj'; and it has already been seen that when members of a clan migrate from their clan-area to colonize lands deserted by other clans outside the *pargana* they no longer consider themselves under any obligation to attend their original clan-god's festivals.

This much has been said by way of introduction, and of apology if, as I fear, this chapter is the least satisfactory and the least final in its conclusions.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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The only writers who seem to have touched on the social organization of the Bastar Marias before are Russell and Hiralal, who said (III, pp. 64-6) :— A/A

Russell and Hiralal, on the social organization of the Bastar Marias

'The Gond rules of exogamy appear to preserve traces of the system found in Australia, by which the whole tribe is split into two or four main divisions, and every man in one or two of them must marry a woman in the other one or two. . . .

'Among the Gonds, however, the subdivision into small exogamous sects has been also carried out, and the class system, if the surmise that it once existed be correct, remains only in the form of a survival, prohibiting marriage between agnates, like an ordinary sept. In one part of Bastar all the septs of the Maria Gonds are divided into two great classes. There are ninety septs in A Class and sixty-nine in B Class, though the list may be incomplete. All the septs in A Class say that they are Bhaiband or Dadabhai to each other, that is in the relation of brothers, or cousins being the sons of brothers. No man of Class A can marry a woman of any sept in Class A. The septs of Class A stand in the relation of Mamabhai or Akomama to those of Class B. Mamabhai means a maternal uncle's son, and Akomama apparently signifies having the same maternal grandfather. Any man of a sept in Class A can marry any woman of a sept in Class B. It will thus be seen that the smaller septs seem to serve no purpose for regulating marriage, and are no more than family names. The tribe might just as well be divided into two great exogamous clans only. Marriage is prohibited between persons related only through males; but according to the exogamous arrangement there is no other prohibition, and a man could marry any maternal relative. Separate rules, however, prohibit his marriage with certain female relatives, and these will be given subsequently (ibid., p. 72). It is possible that the small septs may serve some purpose which has not been elicited, though the inquiry made by Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath[1] was most careful and painstaking.

'In another part of Bastar there were found to be five classes, and each class had a small number of septs in it. The people who supplied this information could not give the names of many septs. Thus Class A had six septs,[2] Class B five, Classes C and D one each, Class E four, and Class F two. A man could not marry a woman of any sept belonging to his own class.

'The Muria Gonds of Bastar have a few large exogamous septs or clans named in Hindi after animals, and each of these clans contains several subsepts with Gondi names. Thus the *Bakarsenu* or Goat race contains the Garde, Kurjami, Karrami and Vadde septs. The *Kachhimsenu* or Tortoise race has the Netami, Kawachi, Usendi and Tekami septs. The *Nagsenu* or Cobra race includes the Maravi, Potari, Karanga, Nurethi, Dhurwa and others. Other exogamous races are the Sodi (or tiger), Behainsa (buffalo), Netam (dog in Gondi), Chamchidai (bat) and one or two more. In this case the exogamous clans with Hindi names would appear to be a late division, and have perhaps been adopted because the meaning of the old Gondi names had been forgotten, or the septs were too numerous to be remembered.'

As will be seen in this chapter, the part of Bastar where five 'classes' were found was presumably the Bison-horn country and its cultural extension, the Dorla country, where there are definitely five phratries each containing varying numbers of clans. The tract in which, according to Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath's enquiry, the

[1] Diwan of Bastar for many years.

[2] Six classes, A to F, are given, though the text speaks of five, the actual number among both Bison-horn Marias and Dorlas. But so few 'septs' are mentioned, nineteen as compared to the fifty in my list of phratries, that the enquiry must have been incomplete.

A/A [See cat. 116, p. 424. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Marias were divided into two moieties containing ninety and sixty-nine 'septs' (for which this book uses the term 'clans') can only have been the country of the Hill Marias.

The clan organization of the Hill Marias

Unfortunately the records of the Rai Bahadur's enquiry are not forthcoming. But he appears never to have entered the Abujhmar hills, and his enquiries were probably based on questions put to Hill Marias at camps to which they came to see him in the plains. The list of hill clans in the appendix shows only fifty clans. My enquiries so far as possible covered even those Hill Maria *parganas* which I did not visit, and though my list is, no doubt, incomplete, the great difference between his 159 and my 50 clans must mean that he included many areas which are not Hill Maria areas, probably all Kutru zamindari, and all Antagarh tahsil.

As we have seen, the clans are not merely little more than surnames; quite apart from questions of exogamy, they are, in the Abujhmar hills, practically political units, each, at least of the flourishing clans, with its own clan-area; and each clan had a *panchayat* system for dealing with everyday offences. Clans may feel themselves closer to some clans in kindred or affinity, as the case may be, than to others; but on the whole it is the social solidarity of the clan and its members, its '*bhumkal*' as the Marias say, that keeps the Hill Marias together. Had it not been for the strong feeling of the clan for its own *bhum* (earth) the mistaken and oppressive land revenue system in vogue till recently and the gross mismanagement of at least the Bastar zamindaris would have resulted in wholesale migration to Chanda District. As it was, many went, but generally a nucleus of the clans remained, and now that things are better in Bastar many of the emigrants are returning.

I started my enquiries strongly influenced by the passage quoted from Russell and Hiralal, and expecting that the hill clans would fall naturally into two moieties. So for long they did. I began with the great Usendi clan of Orcha and the Chhota Dongar hill *pargana*. So far as that *pargana* is concerned, the clans in it do fall into two moieties, the Usendi clan having six clans related to it as *dadabhai* (brother-clan) and fourteen as *akomema* (wife-clan); not only did each of the clans concerned agree that it stood in the relation shown to the Usendi clan, but their statements were confirmed by the actual marriages examined. But the first major difficulty arose in the adjacent Barsur Mar and Mangnar *pargana*. There is no doubt about the Usendi freely intermarrying with the important Gume clan which practically monopolizes Barsur Mar; the pedigree in the appendix, for example, shows four such marriages

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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CHAPTER XIV

MARRIAGE

582 618 WHATEVER the origin of the clans and phratries, they serve as a means of regulating the marriages of Hill and Bison-horn Marias; in the case of the latter, among whom the clan is no longer a territorial as well as a social unit, one might say that the primary function of the clan and phratry organization is the regulation of marriage. A child is born into the clan of its father, and, if a son, must remain in that clan all its life; but, if a daughter, passes on marriage to the clan of the husband, and on re-marriage from his clan to that of the second husband. A son must not take a wife, or a daughter a husband, from the father's clan or from any clan that is brother-clan or *dadabhai* to it: he must marry a wife from, and she must marry into, some clan that is a wife-clan or *akomama* of their father's clan. It has been seen that the phratry system of the Bison-horn Marias gives them a wider field of selection of wives and husbands than the more inchoate group system of Hill Maria clans. A widow, however, must not marry as second husband a man whose clan is brother to her father's clan, even though through being in a phratry other than that of her first husband's clan the second husband's clan would be wife-clan to the first husband's. In a word, throughout a woman's life all her marriages are regulated by the clan into which she was born.

Exogamy

601 114 Appendix III gives a list of the Hill Maria terms of relationship so far as I could ascertain them; they were collected in Orcha and adjacent villages by the genealogical method, and verified in other parts of the Abujhmar hills. They were collected as terms of reference, though some are used also as terms of address, e.g. *mama*, *dada*, *kaka*. I was unable in the time at my disposal to make a similar collection of the Bison-horn Maria terms; but so far as my observation went their terms are the same but for dialectical differences. This applies also, it may be added, in a considerable degree to the terms used by the Gonds of the Nagpur District, and, to judge from the incomplete list given in Trench's *Grammar*, Volume I, to those of the Betul Gonds. It may be added that when [551] a son has been born to him, a Hill or Bison-horn Maria is often addressed by his family and neighbours as the father of his son, e.g. '*Rajin-toppe*', meaning 'Father of Raje'.

601 *Dadabhai*, the word used to designate kindred or brother-clans, is a combination of *dada*, the Gondi term for an elder brother, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Appendix V

Anthropometric Analysis of the Hill and Bison-horn Marias

By Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, M.Sc., B.L.,
Joint Editor, *Man in India*

I accompanied Mr. W. V. Grigson in his March 193[illegible] tour in the Hill and Bison-horn Maria country of the Bastar State, and was able to measure 100 Hill Maria and 50 Bison-horn Maria males; a severe attack of fever unfortunately prevented me from measuring as many Bison-horn as Hill Marias. I measured the Hill Marias in the Abujhmar hills camps at Orcha, Adeq, Itulnar, Hikul and Handawada from these and adjacent Hill villages in the *parganas* of Chhota Dongar Mar, Kutru Mar, Bhairamgarh Mar, and Barsur (Dantewara) Mar. The Bison-horn Marias were nearly all measured in the camp at Aranpur in Dantewara tahsil, near the head of the pass leading down from the Dantewara plateau to the Dorla country of the Konta tahsil; the men were mostly from Aranpur and Chameli *parganas*. I append tables summarizing the results of my measurements; space has forbidden the reproduction here of the long tables of individual measurements, which I hope subsequently to publish elsewhere. I have followed R. Martin's anthropometric technique.

General description

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are generally of medium stature, though tall and short individuals are not uncommon. The mean heights of those measured were 162·7 cm. Hill, and 161·7 cm. Bison-horn Maria. They are very well built, with well-proportioned body and limbs. Their skin colour varies from pale wheat to light black (the actual figures were: out of 100 Hill Marias, 9 light brown, 60 brown, 16 dark brown and 15 light black; out of 50 Bison-horn Marias, 3 pale wheat, 5 light brown, 26 brown, 9 dark brown and 7 light black). They have a thick growth of hair on the head, but often cut it short or even shave it in front and round the peripheral region of the head, leaving a long crown-tuft. They have very little facial and body hair, and even those who can grow sparse beards and moustaches often have them clean shaved. The hair is black or dark brown, and is wavy or curly.

Their foreheads are retreating, but straight foreheads are not rare; of 100 Hill Maria foreheads 16 were straight, 57 slightly

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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APPENDIX VI

LANGUAGE

IN Volume IV of the *Linguistic Survey of India*, Maria is somewhat briefly discussed and considered to be a mere local dialect of Gondi, 'almost identical with the ordinary Gondi of the district'. The only authority on the language mentioned in the *Survey* is Glasfurd's *Report on the Dependency of Bastar* (Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXXIX, Calcutta, 1863); Appendix II of the report contains a 'Maria' vocabulary. But as Glasfurd called the Hill Maria 'Maree', his vocabulary obviously was not collected in the Abujhmar hills, but probably among the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils. The specimen printed in the survey seems to me to be one from the Bison-horn Maria country, while the sketch of the Maria dialect at pp. 532-3 of Vol. IV of the *Linguistic Survey* deals obviously with the Bison-horn Maria dialect. In fact, I do not think that it has before anywhere been stated that there is a marked difference between the two dialects, so marked, indeed, that, as I have observed before, a Hill Maria and a Bison-horn Maria cannot understand each other's mother-tongue and have to communicate in Halbi. I am not qualified to speak in any detail of the differences between the two dialects. A collection of words will often show very marked similarities or identities, but the same word will often be very differently pronounced by a Hill and by a Bison-horn Maria. Inflexions are different, those of the Hill Maria being more similar to those used by the Gond of the plateaux of the Central Provinces, though much gutturalized, while those of the Bison-horn Marias are, presumably, influenced by Telugu contacts. And in general towards the north of Bastar the Hill Maria and the Muria indent on Hindi for words wanting in their mother-tongue, while the farther south you go the more you find the Bison-horn Maria indenting upon Telugu, though he also draws considerably on Halbi. The Bison-horn Maria's speech seems far more guttural than standard Central Provinces Gondi, but even he is amazed at the difficulty of the Hill Maria gutturals, and always compares Hill Maria speech to that of crows.

The volume of transcriptions and translations of Gramophone Records of Languages and Dialects spoken in the Central Provinces and Berar, edited by the late Rai Bahadur Hiralal and published

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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in 1920 at the Madras Government Press, gives two Maria records, which appear to me to be Hill Maria, probably from the south of the Abujhmar hills. They are full of the gutturals *gh*, *kh* and *q* (of which the sounds are similar to the corresponding Arabic gutturals), but do not clearly distinguish the short, almost clipped short, sound of the vowel o (sometimes a also) which I have transliterated in the Glossary and elsewhere as ŏ and ă respectively, as in *ghatŏ* and *pāghai*; unfortunately, there are few examples of these in my specimens below, though they certainly occurred in the speech of the storytellers; but my Hindi scribe had no sign to distinguish short o from long o, or this clipped ă from the ordinary short a which is understood between two consonants in Devanagari script. Undoubtedly, also, the vowel e is sometimes short and sometimes long in Maria, as in all Gondi, but it is almost invariably shown as long both in the gramophone record transcriptions and in my specimens.

The *Linguistic Survey* does not mention the only Maria grammar which then existed, *A Manual of the Mardia Language* by A. A. Lind, published in 1913 at the Mukti Mission Press, Kedgaon. This is a useful work in Bastar, but often exasperating in its deficiencies; the vocabularies and inflexions were collected in different parts among different tribes, and thus are often of little use when most needed. It does, however, attempt to record the gutturals of Hill Maria, and whenever the vocabulary gives alternative forms, one with a guttural and one without, the gutturalized form may be taken to be the Hill Maria form, and the other probably the Bison-horn Maria. The author rightly points out that the guttural Hill *gh* and *kh*, corresponding to Arabic *ghain* and *khe*, are often 'interchanged with ' r and y respectively, meaning that where the Hill Maria e.g. calls his bark cloak ta*gh*āli, the Bison-horn Maria will say *tarāli*. He points out also the existence of a gutturalized h, which is pronounced almost like *kh*; for example the verb *vēhnā*, to say, is by many Hill Marias pronounced practically as *vēkh*nā, and I have so transcribed it in my specimens.

No authority has, so far as I recollect, pointed out one peculiarity that to some extent affects all Gondi speech, but is most marked in the pronunciation of Hill and Bison-horn Maria. That is the check, almost click, so common in the middle of long words, especially between the root of a verb and its inflexion. Sometimes I have indicated this by inserting a small a above and between two consonants; I think that an apostrophe in the same position would be sounder.

Towards the south, the Hill Maria often drops an initial h, and softens his gutturals nearly as much as his Bison-horn neighbour.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

COMMENT

114 In a remarkable defence of scholarship and science, the late Baron von Hügel enumerated the intellectual virtues which find but a scanty development outside the life of the mind—'candour, moral courage, intellectual honesty, scrupulous accuracy, chivalrous fairness, endless docility to facts, disinterested collaboration, unconquerable hopefulness and perseverance, manly renunciation of popularity and easy honours, love of bracing labour and strengthening solitude'.[1] These qualities, which the anthropologist needs even more than the theologian, can be recognized in all the work to which Mr. W. V. Grigson has set his hand: in this book there is specially revealed his 'endless docility to facts', in this preface his genius for disinterested collaboration. For it is not altogether a light thing to turn another investigator loose in one's own special pastures with full freedom to kick up his heels and do and say what he will.

I have perhaps two qualifications for entering those pastures: the first is that I have been over the ground—ten years later, it is true—but largely in Grigson's footsteps, as it was by his inspiration: the second is that I have read this book more frequently—I am willing to bet—than any other human being now living on this planet. I was once stranded on a three weeks' tour in Orissa with no other literary nourishment than Lord Wavell's *Other Men's Flowers*, and I estimate that I read (for I read quickly) that estimable anthology through no less than a dozen times. I must have read *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* even more often than that, for during several touring seasons it was never out of my hands, as I followed its guidance and used its great array of facts as a basis for further research. It is not an easy book, but it wears well. Three years' testing left me with a profound respect for its accuracy, admiration for the style and manner and a deep affection for the author who could write with such understanding of poor and ignorant folk. Naturally there are points where I disagree, where my judgement or information differs from Grigson's, even where I would, after much enquiry, go so far as to say that he was mistaken. He collected much of his material fifteen years ago, and wrote most of it not long afterwards; in

[1] F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion* (London, 1927), Vol. I, p. 79.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

those days he tended perhaps to give more credence to the reports of his subordinates, to accept more readily the denials of villagers, and to generalize more frequently than he would to-day.

Yet these are but toys; the massive structure stands and will mark an epoch in the development of anthropological research in middle India. Burma and Assam, which have given us many good monographs are, for ethnographical purposes, largely separate from the rest of the sub-continent. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*[1] is the first Indian book in the new manner which reaches modern standards of enquiry and documentation, which can compare with publications on America and the Pacific. It is not, of course, all due to Grigson, but it is an instructive exercise to examine the books on peninsular India published before 1938 and those that have appeared since.

No one has known and explored Bastar as Grigson has, and his real book is written on the face of the countryside he loved so completely. He started a tradition in Bastar and still to-day there is peace, freedom and happiness in hundreds of villages as a result of the principles he established. A whole legend has grown up round the name of 'Grikson Diwan', for if Grigson loved the Marias and Murias they certainly reciprocated his affection. It is rare for aboriginals to know, still less to remember, the names of administrators, yet I found in 1940 and the following years that Grigson's name was known in the remotest villages of the State, and old men who had no idea that there was a war believed that somewhere or other Grikson Diwan was caring for their interests. At the top of the beautiful Raughat the villagers will show you a great rock from which, they say, Mr. and Mrs. Grigson, enraptured by the loveliness of the scene, once leapt fully clad into the waters of the pool far below. The Murias of Koilibera were still chuckling ten years afterwards at their recollections of Grigson's chase of a man-eater, when the Marias of the south whom he brought with him ate every monkey in the hills and stripped all the trees of the forest of red ants—Grigson himself being by no means backward in sharing the fantastic diet. In one high lonely clearing

[1] So far as I know, Mr. Grigson has published the following since *The Maria Gonds of Bastar: Reports—Notes on the Aboriginal Problem in the Mandla District* (Nagpur, 1940); *The Aboriginal Problem in the Balaghat District* (Nagpur, 1941); *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Nagpur, 1944). *Forewords*—to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Bombay, 1943), to Verrier Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943), to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Tribal Hyderabad* (Hyderabad, 1945). Translations of Muria Songs in *New Verse*, Feb.-March 1937. Review of Elwin, *The Baiga* in *Man*, Vol. XLI, p. 38. Letter on 'Cowrie Shells in the Central Provinces of India' in *Man*, Vol. XL, p. 159. Note on 'Human Sacrifice in Hyderabad' in *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, p. 68. *The Aboriginal in the Future India* (London, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1945): Presidential Address, Deccan History Association (Hyderabad, 1945).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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of the Abujhmar, I was told, Grigson once encountered an ancient woman completely naked. She had never seen a white face before and, believing the visitor to be a Rakshasa, fell at his feet begging to be allowed to go for a few moments to her village to bid farewell to her little grandson, after which she would return to be devoured. 114

There is no end to these stories, many of them tales of generosity and kindness that would embarrass Grigson to have repeated. The result has been that Bastar is a very pleasant place to tour in. I have had trouble enough in Provinces and States, where there has been no one like Grigson to precede me, to realize vividly the difference that he has made. He is not the only one; Bastar has long been fortunate in her officers; but he set the pace.

When it was decided to issue an Indian edition of this book and Grigson asked me to write a sort of Comment to go with it, I was puzzled to know what to put in. I have done a certain amount of writing[1] about Bastar and the Bison-horn Marias, among whom I spent a good deal of time, and I did not want to repeat here what I had already written. In the end, at the risk of being very scrappy, I decided to give all my unpublished notes on the Marias, rather on the principle of the Abbot's order at the sack of Beziers: 'Kill them all; God will know his own.'

I deal first, therefore, with a few larger subjects, where my material supplements Grigson's, such as magic and the tragedies to which its practice leads, Bison-horn Maria ideas and taboos with regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, the dormitory and funerary customs. It seemed worth while to describe in some detail a marriage ceremony and the Ghotpal Marhai which I had witnessed personally. After that I proceed to give brief notes on points in the book which appear to need amplification. Short of reprinting a large amount of already published material, I do not know what other plan was possible.

II

Do the Marias believe in a Supreme Being? Grigson was not able to assemble any very definite evidence on this point. 'Only around Orcha', he says, 'and a few neighbouring Chhota 176

[1] For convenience of reference I shall give a list of my publications on Bastar and the Marias or Marias. 'Ceremonial Cross-Dressing among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 163; 'Suicide among the Aboriginals of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 207; 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII, p. 121; 'The Sago Palm in Bastar State', *J.R.A.S. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 69; 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, p. 97; *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); 'Stilt-Walking among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLIV, p. 38; *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944); *The Muria and their Ghotul* (Bombay, 1947); 'Funerary Customs in Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXV. [113]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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porcupines, peacocks, fish and tigers. The carpenter had put in a representation of Hanuman, but the Marias, knowing little of him, supposed it was a policeman included to emphasize Kopa's dignity.

The pillar also has, or had, pigeons on the top and there was a trident, though the Marias were ignorant of its meaning. 'It is the pole's turban,' they said. 'It is made of iron to save us the trouble of renewing it.'

It is obviously impossible to describe all these pillars[1]; in 1942 they were to be found near Chitrakot, near Killepal, at Lalaguda, near Sirisguda, at Taragaon, at Kumalnar and at Garda. I saw a very simple one at Chingner in honour of an important member of the Lekhami clan. It was standing out in the jungle by itself; there were three rows of lozenges cut in the wood near the top and a single carved pigeon above. It was still red with oil mixed with *geru*. At its foot was a flat stone supported on two others, the *kanal-garya*. From the top there hung a strip of cloth, possibly a bit of the dead man's dancing dress.

It is important to note that these pillars are closely associated with the megalithic culture of the Marias. Sometimes both a menhir and pillar are erected for the same man; sometimes the pillar stands at the end of a row of stone monuments. It is not, therefore, in any sense a substitute for the *wraskal* but a supplement to it. I have noticed a similar combination of stone and wooden monuments among the Lanjhia Saoras who have come under Kond influence.

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It is tempting to suppose that the various animals and birds carved on the pillar have some totemic significance, but I doubt if this is so. In the first place, every pillar has a wide variety of animals portrayed upon it; in the second the people themselves say that these animals simply represent the ordinary objects of the chase and are carved to indicate some of the interests of the dead man. Each pillar in fact attempts to be a biography in wood of the deceased.

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These notes are desultory enough, but they do at least give me an opportunity of paying some tribute to the man whose endless docility to facts has enabled him to make so striking a contribution to science and whose great-hearted affection for the aboriginals has led him to propose a policy and establish principles which, if adopted by the National Governments of the future, will preserve freedom and happiness in the hills and forests of India. There is much that is tedious in anthropology, much that hardly seems worth while,

[1] The pillar of Marvi Oyami Mava, the homicide, is described in detail in *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 201.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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much that cannot conceivably be turned to practical advantage. It needs a mind like Mr. Grigson's which can see the whole, grasp the meaning of the culture, love it and use it. He is one of the few who, in Blake's words, has 'the power to make the inside of the Cave seem Infinite'. 114

VERRIER ELWIN

Patangarh Village.
Mandla District
August 17th, 1945

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A NOTE ON THE MARIA GONDS OF CHANDA AND DRUG DISTRICTS

114 I HAD planned for this Indian edition of *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* a long note on the Marias of the zamindaris of the Chanda and Drug districts which border on the country of the Hill Marias of Bastar, and the Muria country of the former Paralkot zamindari and the Antagarh (now the Narainpur) tahsil of Bastar. From 1940 to 1942 I held various secretariat appointments at Nagpur, but was also simultaneously entrusted with the duty of investigating the conditions, throughout the Central Provinces and Berar, of the so-called aboriginal tribes. Thus, unlike most occupants of secretariat pews, I was occasionally able to escape from the tedium of that distressing and almost universal complaint, the files (as they were once described in a witty farewell speech by a great provincial administrator), to the backwoods, their green and mountainy valleys, and their scattered Korku, Baiga or Gond tribes, still so little outwardly changed from the state in which Sir Richard Temple, the first Chief Commissioner of the newly formed Central Provinces had seen them eighty years before, when, as Forsyth[1] wrote :—

> 'Then were seen strange sights in that unknown land; when distant valleys and mountain gorges, that had heard no other sound than the woodman's axe, echoed to the horse-hoofs of the tireless Chief, and his small knot of often weary followers; when the solitary Gond or Byga clearing his patch of millet on the remote hillside, was astonished by the apparition, on some commanding hill-top, of that veritable 'Government' (Sirkar) in the flesh, which to him and his for several generations had been an abstraction.'

Alas, with every year seeing new additions to the statute book of India and of the provinces, each adding more and more to the burden of files and desk-work, it has long been increasingly rare for the Gond or Baiga to see the Sirkar or any of its minions in the flesh, and rare for the district officer to be able to tour off the beaten track in the backward, forest parts of his district. Hence the growth of the aboriginal problem, the task of enabling the tribesman to preserve his own culture and values, even the very acres which he won from the jungle or inherited from his father, against the

[1] Captain J. Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India* (London, 1889), pp. 17-18.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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invasion by land-hungry Hindus of the highlands and backwoods, with its accompaniment of money-lenders, cloth pedlars, lawyers' touts, landlords and forest contractors.

The terms of reference for my aboriginal enquiry directed my special attention to the conditions in the tribal tracts which had been declared Partially Excluded Areas under the Government of India Act of 1935. Those are the tracts, speaking generally, where the tribes still constitute a majority of the population and by thus being able to preserve much of their own traditional way of life can still present something of a united front to the invasion of new settlers and new ideas.[1] The Partially Excluded Areas of Chanda district include the huge Ahiri zamindari of Sironcha tahsil and the Garchiroli tahsil zamindaris of Dhanora, Dudhmala, Jharapapara, Khutgaon, Kotgal, Muramgaon, Palasgarh, Rangi, Sirsundi, Sonsari, Chandala, Gilgaon, Pai-Muranda, Potegaon and Gewardha. My enquiries therefore gave me a long desired chance of seeing the Marias of Chanda. These zamindaris have a total area of 4,013 square miles, mostly of hill and forest, and had in 1941 a population of 115,031; this figure included 70,821 'aboriginals', so that out of every 1,000 persons, 607 were tribal. In the 1931 census 34,776 of the Gonds of these zamindaris were returned as Marias, against a total of 34,986[2] Marias for all the British districts of the Central Provinces, leaving only some 210 Marias for the khalsa areas of Chanda district and the zamindaris of the Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district. The total strength of the Maria tribe in the British districts of the province is given in the 1941 census summary as 39,553.[3] district figures not being shown. Almost all of these will have been returned from the Chanda Partially Excluded Areas.

It has been indicated in this book how vague are the terms 'Maria' and 'Muria',[4] and how all the tribes thus vaguely designated speak of themselves as Koitor or Koi, distinguishing between one group and another by such terms as Highland Koitor, or Lowland or Plains Koitor. Let it be remembered that the word Maria is not a Gondi word and that *all* Gondi-speaking Gonds throughout the Central Provinces and Berar and Hyderabad State speak of themselves as Koitor; then it will be realized how unprecise, unscientific a term 'Maria' really is. Here in these Chanda zamindaris it is

[1] Any investigator of tribal conditions soon realizes that the tribesmen inside the Partially Excluded Areas are not yet in as bad a plight as their kinsmen outside those areas, in the more 'advanced' districts, where they are steadily losing such land as is left to them and sinking to the status of landless labourers in the service of those who have expropriated them.

[2] and [3] *Census of India*, 1941, Vol. I, Part I, Table XIV, p. 118.

[4] See pp. 33-6, 42, 44, 46-50.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Central Provinces terminology it was Maria country, or had till recently been thus considered; according to modern Bastar terminology it would be considered Muria country. To this there is one exception. The map on page 20 shows a projection westward into Chanda district of the Abujhmar Mountains between the western border of the State and the Kotri River, north of the Indrawati, just west of the junction of the Behra Mar, Jatwada and Farsal *parganas* of Narainpur (Antagarh tahsil) shown in the sketch-map on page 33. On this projection of the hills there are, speaking from memory, seven or eight villages which are definitely Hill Maria like the adjacent Abujhmar villages of Bastar, completely Hill Maria in culture, peopled by tribesmen who, like the Hill Maria of Bastar, call themselves Meta (Highland) Koitor, and despise the Maria of Lahiri and the other plains villages of Ahiri zamindari below their fastnesses.

I was able to make a rapid tour through much of this Chanda and Drug country in December 1940, and January 1941; certain preliminary investigations before my visit were made for me in Chanda by Mr. J. D. Kerawala of the Central Provinces and Berar Civil Service, who was then the Sub-divisional Officer, and he was with me throughout my tour. Some of the administrative and economic notes made on this tour were incorporated in various chapters of my book *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar*[1] to which I shall refer hereafter as *The Aboriginal Problem*, for the sake of brevity. I also filled a thick note-book with ethnographic and anthropological material, and had intended to use that material for this Note. Unfortunately the note-book perished when my house at Hyderabad was burnt down in a sudden senseless riot on the Ides of March 1946, along with almost all my Chanda photographs, the note-books, manuscripts and photographs of twenty-five years in India, and the whole of my library. No doubt this has simplified packing to quit India, but so far as this Note is concerned it has meant depriving it of what would have made it most valuable. It has therefore to be written from memory, and references in *The Aboriginal Problem*.

Let me now describe the tour generally, mentioning the places visited and the persons and things seen. My first halt was at Allapilli[2] in Sironcha tahsil, the site of the teak saw-mills of the provincial Forest Department, a few miles from Ahiri,[3] the headquarters of the Ahiri zamindari, which I visited from Allapilli.

[1] Nagpur, Government Printing, Central Provinces and Berar, 1944.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV0852.
[3] Ibidem, ref. MV9149.

1: Grigson G-S (1927-1934) 1949
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Such iron knives or spurs as were tied on to the cock's legs were very small, and a Lahiri Maria criticized the usual theory that this way of increasing a cock's natural armament is cruel on the ground that if it meant a quicker death for the defeated cock it was merciful. All the headmen promised that if the ban on cock-fights were lifted they would frown on cash or grain betting, and, if we so desired, on the use of iron spurs and knives. Thoughtless officiousness such as that which stopped this favourite tribal pastime is only too typical of the lack of imagination with which officials, great and small, are apt to interfere with all that lends colour to aboriginal life.

Lahiri was one of the chief camps where I questioned the local Marias as to their clan organization, particularly the grouping of clans into phratries according to the number of *Chuddur penk* or Little Gods. I mentioned on pages 194-5 my doubts as to the traditional accounts of this god-grouping among the Chanda Marias. But these accounts go back to Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report. A somewhat confusing summary of his account, on page 101 of the *Gazetteer*, seems to imply that there is little difference between the god-grouping of the Raj-Gond, the other Gond tribes of Chanda. Lucie-Smith divided the Raj-Gonds into a four-god group, with the tortoise and crocodile totems, a five-god group with the iguana totem, a six-god group with the tiger totem, and a seven-god group with the porcupine totem: these groups were divided into what the *Gazetteer* calls 'houses or families, distinguished by their family name or *padi*', i.e. into what in this book have been called clans (*pari*), which numbered 28 among the Raj-Gonds, 24 among the Marias and 17 among the Dhurve Gond. Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, p. 66) say that in Chanda :—

> 'There are four main groups worshipping seven, six, five and four gods respectively, and each group contains ten to fifteen septs. A man cannot marry a woman of any sept which worships the same number of gods as himself. Each group has a sacred animal which the members revere, that of the seven-god worshippers being a porcupine, of the six-god worshippers, a tiger, of the five-god worshippers, the *saras* crane, and of the four-god worshippers, a tortoise. As a rule the members of the different groups do not know the names of their gods, and in practice it is doubtful whether they restrict themselves to the proper number of gods of their own group. Formerly there were three-, two-, and one-god worshippers, but in each of these classes it is said that there were only one or two septs, and they found that they were much inconvenienced by the paucity of their numbers, perhaps for the purposes of communal worship and feasting, and hence they got themselves enrolled in the larger groups. In reality it would appear that the classification according to the number of gods worshipped is being forgotten and the three lowest groups have disappeared.'

They suggested that this conjecture was supported by the fact that in Chhindwara and other localities only two large six-god and seven-god groups remained.

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The accounts over-simplify scattered data collected without concentrated field-enquiry. Even the *Gazetteer*, in a footnote to the passage quoted above from page 101, speaks of a group of three-god Marias having lately been verified in Lahiri. Shoobert[1] quotes the late Bishop Wood as having verified the existence of a group of three-god Marias in the Chanda villages of Lahiri and Beni-Gunda near the Bastar border of Chanda district, and enquiries which the Bishop had made for me in 1929 by the Rev. S. G. Patwardhan, the well-known Indian missionary priest of the Scottish Episcopal Church Mission at Ahiri, went further, as indicated on page 195, and established definitely that the Chanda Marias of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi,[2] Uddera and Kandodi had one three-god clan, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans (31 clans against Lucie-Smith's 24). Russell and Hiralal are wrong even of Chhindwara district, where I verified some three-god clans (as in Nagpur district) and even a one-god and a no-god clan. Baron C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's forthcoming book on the Raj-Gonds of the Adilabad plateaux of Hyderabad will deal exhaustively with the god-grouping[3] of the Adilabad Gonds, whose social system is based on a system of four phratries (*saga*), the seven-god, six-god, five-god and four-god phratries. His conclusions there have been to some extent foreshadowed in his interesting article 'The Cult of the Clan Gods among the Raj-Gonds of Hyderabad', published in *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, 1945, pages 149-86. His field-work has been far more detailed and closer than any previous work among Raj-Gonds, and the whole body of myths which he has recorded as to these phratries or god-groups throws altogether new light on the origins and facts of Gond social organization. It badly needs to be supplemented rapidly by similar enquiries among all the sections of the Gonds not only in Chanda district, but also in all the Central Provinces and Berar districts and States where this god-grouping still persists. One is apt to assume that it is dying out or deteriorating rapidly in areas formerly known as British India, in contrast to areas such as Adilabad, which has never been under British rule, and has been till recently free from the detribalizing, hinduizing work of the schoolmaster, or as most of the Chanda Maria country. But the difference may be rather that the Gond of the more

[1] *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*, 1931, p. 334.

[2] I checked this at Burgi (*Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV38.29) and discussed the whole question with Rev. Patwardhan at Ahiri: the 31 clans may be far from exhaustive.

[3] Haimendorf prefers to speak of 'seven-brother', 'six-brother' phratries, holding that his Raj-Gonds speak of a classification by the number not so much of *penk* (gods) as of *Wenk*, an almost untranslatable term meaning 'heroes', or 'divine ancestors'.

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advanced ' areas further north, faced by Brahman ridicule of his culture, has more and more withdrawn into his shell and learnt to conceal the more intimate features of his tribal religion and culture.

Until we have before us the records of such systematized and widespread field-work it is impossible to form any reliable general theory of the origin of this god-grouping. My tentative view, so far as the Chanda Marias are concerned, for what it is worth, is that the god-grouping is a comparatively recent importation from their northern and western Gond (especially Raj-Gond) neighbours. As I have pointed out on pages 194-5, the Bastar Marias and Murias have neither god-grouping nor *chuddur penk*. I added that none of the Chanda Marias who had come to my camps in Bastar had these institutions. This may appear inconsistent with the definite proof of the existence at least of god-grouping among the Chanda Marias, as recorded from Lucie-Smith's time onwards, and verified by Bishop Wood and Rev. Patwardhan and in this tour of mine. But here again one must distinguish between the Chanda Marias of the hills above Lahiri and those of the plains and foothills. Those who came to my Bastar camps were all Chanda Hill Marias: those among whom god-grouping was verified were plains Marias. I camped for four days at Kuvakodi, a hill village high above Lahiri, and visited other hill villages close by, both in Chanda and in Bastar. The Chanda Hill Marias are identical in culture with the Bastar Hill Marias, and like them had, at least at Christmas 1940, no god-grouping and no *chuddur penk*. The Hill Marias of Chanda in fact appear to be what the *Gazetteer*[1] describes as the Gaita sub-tribe of Gonds, and the speakers of the dialect referred to by it[2] and in the *Linguistic Survey* as Gattu, the language of the 'Kois or Gonds of the hills, especially in Sironcha', who 'are known as Gattu or Gotte Kois'; for it speaks of the Gaita Gonds as being 'almost alone in retaining the old Gondi custom, once universal, of building their village in two long barracks lying east and west facing each other about eighty feet apart' in which the married people dwell, while the bachelors, and in some villages unmarried girls also, have separate barracks. This description clearly fits the Hill Marias of Kuvakodi and adjacent hill villages, as it would do the villages of the neighbouring Hill Maria *parganas* of Bastar.

So we start with these, the most primitive of the Marias of Chanda, and find among them no trace of god-grouping or *chuddur penk*. Down the hill we come to Lahiri, and we find god-grouping (which, however, includes a three-god group absent among the Chanda and Adilabad Raj-Gonds), but, so far as I could ascertain, no *chuddur*

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 97, 98.
[2] Ibidem, p. 75.

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[875] too, no caste Hindu had been forthcoming and the authorities had had to draw on the Depressed Classes to find a *guru*, who was a town-bred Mahar, knew no language but his Marathi mother-tongue and was utterly ignorant of aboriginal life and customs, though twenty-two of his thirty-three boys were Maria-speaking aboriginals. The boys were doing some listless spinning, a useless craft in an area where no cotton is grown. The raw cotton for spinning has to be carted from Chanda, miles away: not one of the boys will spin in after-life. I asked if they could sing: the *guru* switched them from spinning on to droning out in a dreary, nasal tone a Marathi song which meant nothing to them. Helped by their parents, I tried to get the boys to sing a Maria song and dance a Maria dance, but their spontaneity had been so quenched by the alien ideas of the *Vidya Mandir* that even with their parents' help they were too shy or shamefaced to attempt their own wonderful tribal songs and dances. There was nothing in their whole curriculum which bore any relation to their tribal culture or appealed to the tribal imagination. Even the *Vidya Mandir* fields were so far from the village that the boys never visited them or learnt modern agricultural methods from the *jamadar* in charge, who merely grew rice to meet the cost of this useless institution. It was worse than useless, for it was detribalizing the boys, making them ashamed of their own way of life, and giving them nothing in return: it was no surprise that in this village all were peculiarly reticent as to the existence of a *gotul*, and that the latter was a moribund affair.

● 1114 This completes the picture of my tour to Chanda Maria country, so far it has been possible to reconstruct it from the printed record of *The Aboriginal Problem* and from memory. Ethnologically the Note is somewhat meagre in its information. The impression, however, that I carry in my mind of the Chanda Marias is of a tribal culture still vigorous in its institutions and its arts, still knitting together the ways of life of a vigorous tribe closely akin on the one side to the Marias and Murias of Bastar, on the other side to the Raj-Gond and other tribes of northern and western Chanda, and of Milabad. What differences there are between the Chanda Marias and the Hill and other Marias of Bastar and the Murias of north Bastar and Kanker, only detailed field-work can define. It is an admirable theatre for such field-work, and the time for it is running short, since the Marias of Chanda are exposed, in a way that no Bastar tribes are exposed, to the impacts of modern Indian civilization. Of particular interest would be an investigation of my theory that the social organization of the plains Marias of Chanda was fundamentally similar to that of the Hill Marias and Murias of Bastar but has been overlaid with god-grouping and other ideas inherent in the social organization of

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the later waves of Gonds and Raj-Gonds which set up the kingdom of the Gond Maharajas of Chanda. It would be very interesting also to see whether anything survives of the peculiarly Hill Maria and Muria cult of the clan-god as distinct from the more developed religious system of the Raj-Gonds, with its wonderful foundation of myth, the full richness and religious and cultural significance of which the world will begin to realize when Haimendorf's epoch-making book on the Raj-Gonds of Adilabad is published in the near future, and when it is followed up by similar detailed investigation of Gond life and custom in all parts of Gondwana. How far there is any common mythological basis of Raj-Gond and Maria culture would be a factor of great significance. I am conscious that the weakest side of this book has been its failure to probe into the mythology and folk-songs of the Bastar Marias. I do not believe Hill Maria culture to be nearly as rich in that respect as Muria culture is shown to be by Verrier Elwin's book, *The Muria and their Ghotul*. Yet there must be more to be said of the folk-tales and mythology of the Marias of Bastar than has appeared in the first edition of this book; indeed the second section of Elwin's Comment in this edition gives some indication of the wealth of Maria myth awaiting record in Bastar.

Another question clearly needing investigation is the extent to which the *gotul* as an institution is a real factor in Chanda Maria life. I have implied in this Note that it survives, but is gradually being relegated into obscurity as a result of the impact of Hindu ideas and of Hindu ridicule. That would, however, apply more in the northern zamindaris than in the country along the Bastar border from the River Indrawati north to Bharapapra. This part of Ahiri zamindari is landlocked and largely protected from the influx of Hindu ideas save in so far as these are brought in by zamindari and government subordinates. The fact moreover that the *Sendhia* and *patti panchayat* organization is still vigorous in Ahiri zamindari should be an indication that there has been no psychological inhibition on these Marias preserving their tribal life and cultural inheritance unimpaired. It would be interesting, however, to trace the outer boundaries of the *gotul* system and to see what has happened to it, when, and why, in these outer fringes.

This Note is stronger in its picture of economic conditions. Here the most significant fact has been the banning of *jalapod* or shifting cultivation during and after the Great War of 1914-18. One would like, given the time and opportunity, to get at the psychological reaction of the Maria to this as expressed in his folk-songs; one would like also to be able to go through the records of criminal

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114 and civil litigation in which Maria parties have been involved since this interference with their way of life, and to see also if it has had any 241 bearing on suicide. Quite clearly, however, it has had a tremendous and adverse effect on their economics. It has accentuated their transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy and, by virtually forcing them to grow rice, a commercial food crop, as their principal crop, it has played into the hands of the *bania* and the money-lender who naturally desire to buy up rice for export. It may be suspected also that this has had an adverse effect on the diet and physique of the Maria. The small millets, which are the characteristic and favourite food of the Marias and were best grown in the *podu* clearings, are dietetically of higher value than rice. Their market value was small, but so long as the Marias' granary had ample stores of these millets, he had not to depend upon the money-lender for seed or cattle, nor to bother about marketing his produce. 114 The only partial remedy so far provided for the economic ills caused by the stopping of *podu* has been the departmental forest work at 313 Allapilli. Here the Maria, doing work of a type for which his life in the forest suits him and receiving fair and prompt cash payment for his labour, has been able to earn money which could keep him out of the clutches of the money-lender and the bribe-taker. But this too has had its detribalizing effect, accustoming him to working far from his home village and in close contact with an alien civilization and culture.

114 The next difficulties that the Maria has to solve in assimilating himself to the life of modern India are the problems resulting from the impact of political India with its steady tendency to seek to reduce all things and all institutions throughout India to a drab uniformity. There is no doubt that the Maria is not ready to exercise the vote. It is equally clear that he has his own vigorous tribal organization and that his *patti panchayat* could easily be entrusted with the same powers that have been given to the village and *pargana panchayats* in Bastar. It seems obvious also that on these *panchayats* could be based some sort of system whereby Marias could handle the problems of local self-government in their country. These *panchayats*, for example, if entrusted with the selection of local Marias for a zamindari *panchayat*, could produce a body in real touch with tribal life in all its facets. Tribal village life is still naturally co-operative, even though in the plains individualism is now stronger than in the largely collective villages of the Hills. In fact the whole *podu* system was an incentive to the co-operation of all the villagers; rice cultivation, in contrast, drives villagers into individualism and ideas of private property as indeed does the whole land revenue system which has been

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gradually foisted from the developed lands of Hindustan upon all the tribal areas of India. Yet the Co-operative Department does no work among the Chanda Marias. Such work would indeed be useless if stereotyped as usual. What is needed is a deliberate attempt to implant amongst the Marias co-operative organization of forest labour, whether for working at Allapilli or for taking coupes or contracts for minor produce in other zamindari or Government forests. Village grain-banks could be made to flourish, for after all, the existing granary in a Maria village, even if in these days the ultimate owner of the surplus is the Teli money-lender, is essentially a village grain-bank from which the villager can help himself to seed or even to grain for food if he observes the implicit obligation of replacing it with 25 or 50 per cent. interest out of his next harvest; but grain-banks should be the property of the village and not of alien exploiters. If the Maria is to be educated so as to hold his own in the modern world, his education can best come in the first instance from the fostering of such co-operative enterprise, accompanied by protection from the alien money-lender, subordinate officials and other exploiters. Out of this economic self-government can spring the elements of political self-government.

Education is advocated generally as a means of protection. But the standardized 'education' gained in the ordinary village school has not protected the plains villager from the money-lender, and is something entirely alien to the living culture of the tribes. One of the worst features of the spasmodic attempts to provide education in the Maria villages has been the impossibility of getting town-bred teachers of good social standing to resign themselves to exile in the forest. This, as we have seen, has led to the importation of teachers from the Depressed Classes with their habitual inferiority complex. A Maria or a Gond is not an untouchable, and it is wrong to set a man of 'untouchable mentality' to teach and exercise a teacher's authority over him. The only hope of meeting the growing desire for education in a sound way is to impart education through teachers drawn from the tribe itself, knowing the tribal language and tribal lore, and thoroughly at home with tribal villagers. Both Verrier Elwin and I have on various occasions set forth our general ideas as to the soundest approach to the problem of aboriginal education; there is a synthesis of our ideas in Chapter 14 of *The Aboriginal Problem*. But the most effective experiment in this direction within my knowledge has been the Marlavai work initiated by the Haimendorfs amongst the Gonds of the central plateaux of Adilabad District in the Nizam's Dominions. Gond youths were selected from surrounding villages, where there was a demand for education, and put through a course of training in a

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114 village training centre where all the buildings were built of local materials in precisely the same style as the existing village houses but with improved dimensions, light and ventilation. The Gondi language is used as the medium of instruction, Laubach Gondi charts having been prepared, and Gondi primers with Gondi folk-songs, tales and myths: the teachers were also trained to teach Marathi and Urdu.[1] Model grain-banks and co-operative stores and an agricultural farm have been based on this centre which has also trained Gonds and Kolams in the work of the *patel* and the *patwari*. When he passes out, the new schoolmaster goes back to his village and with a small grant of cash and free timber has to get a rough school building constructed. These schools are visited regularly by the head of the Marlavai training centre, and there are periodic rallies at Marlavai. These methods have rapidly expanded educational facilities among the Adilabad Gonds, and the schools are kept in close touch with the vigorous tribal life; tribal games, songs and dances are an essential part of the school curriculum. What is more, the tribal headmen and elders are kept in close touch with Marlavai and its offshoots, and are consulted freely on all new ideas as to curricula and other developments. Classes for adults are also held in Marlavai and some of the village schools.

If the Maria *gotul* life is at all vigorous it should not be impossible to link it with such modern education. For the *gotul* is essentially a children's commonwealth in which the youths are instructed in the tribal way of life. If that way of life is to be supplemented by education enabling the Maria to read official documents, village records, and money-lenders' accounts and the accounts of his own co-operative societies, it would be natural in some way to link the new education with the *gotul*, and to adopt for the reading and writing curricula the songs and stories which are sung and told to the *gotul* gatherings.

000 The task of dealing with these problems has almost finally passed from British hands, and it has become the unshared responsibility of the educated Hindu or Muslim to do his best to protect the aboriginal and bring him forward to contribute to the India of the future his characteristic joy of life and his tradition of co-operating with his fellow men. Nothing will be gained by puritanical opposition to liquor, music and dancing. Much of very great value will be lost if any distinctive elements of tribal cultures are frowned upon or ridiculed. The whole problem of the future of the tribes bristles with difficulties with which we have failed to cope in the historically short period of our connexion with India; Indians themselves

[1] In Chanda or Drug there would be no such trilingual difficulty as it would be necessary only to use either Marathi or Hindi in addition to Gondi.

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128 up to reprobation, but simply to describe and understand. To them, the union of the sexes is on the same plane as eating and drinking, to be indulged in without stint on every possible occasion.[1]

Among the Muria, where sex is regarded as something much higher than eating and drinking and the technique of love has been developed to an almost ideal level, it is obviously still more necessary that we should study this subject. To such a study we may also apply wise words of Malinowski.

> In anthropology the essential facts of life must be stated simply and fully, though in scientific language, and such a plain statement cannot really offend the most delicately minded nor the most prejudiced reader; nor can it be of any use to the seeker after pornography; least of all can it entice the unripe interest of the young. For pruriency consists in oblique day-dreaming and not in simple and direct statement. The reader will find that the natives treat sex in the long run not only as a source of pleasure, but, indeed, as a thing serious and even sacred. Nor do their customs and ideas eliminate from sex its power to transform crude material fact into wonderful spiritual experience, to throw the romantic glamour of love over the technicalities of love-making.[2]

●114 The neglect of the village dormitory as a subject of research, not only in Bastar but throughout the world, is astonishing.[3] In English, Hutton Webster's *Primitive Secret Societies* deals only with the men's houses from which women are rigorously omitted. In German there is the standard work by Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde* on age-groups and men's societies, a study by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Das Junggesellenhaus im Westlichen Hinterindien*,[4] on the social functions of the dormitories in Further India, and a chapter in *Völker und Kulturen* by Schmidt and Koppers which deals with age-grades and the social functions of the dormitories. For the institution as maintained by specific tribes, we have hints and scattered details in many books, but full-dress accounts are rare. In India the most detailed are C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's on the Konyak Naga and S. C. Roy's on the Uraon. In Africa Leakey has given some valuable information about the intimate life in the *manyatta* of the Masai, and Malinowski has an illuminating account of the Trobriand *bukumatula*. But compared to what might have been written on so fascinating and important a subject comparatively little has yet been attempted.

Moreover the great museums of ethnographic fact also ignore the subject. There is only a passing reference in Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage* to the institution, though one would have thought it highly relevant to his discussion of the hypothesis of primitive promiscuity. Briffault is equally silent, so is Frazer. Nor does Unwin, in a book largely devoted to a study of pre-nuptial chastity, *Sex and Culture*, pay any attention to the evidence (scanty enough, yet of great importance) from the village dormitory. Hambly, in his *Origins of Education among Primitive People*, mentions the dormitory, but hardly accords it its rightful place as one of the most powerful agents of

[1] E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 36.

[2] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (London, 1932), p. xlv.

[3] Long ago Peal noticed the same thing. 'The paucity of references to the Morong in many standard works relating to the Indo-Pacific region, is most extraordinary.'—S. E. Peal, 'On the Morong as possibly a Relic of Pre-marriage Communism', *JAI*, Vol. XXII (1893), p. 255.

[4] In *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, Vol. I (1930). I owe the references to the continental literature to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

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PREFACE

primitive education. Havelock Ellis would, I think, have found much to interest him in the sexual relations of the boys and girls of primitive societies, but he too seems to have considered the existing literature as lacking in detail and authority. 114

Yet—as a glance at this book will show—the ghotul, and presumably the village dormitory elsewhere, provides the most important evidence for any discussion on group-marriage, group-concubinage, pre-nuptial chastity, pre-nuptial infertility, experimental marriage, the union of near kin and the value of the rules of exogamy. For the general reader, uninterested in technical anthropological problems, the ghotul raises equally interesting questions about co-education, the influence of punishment, the expediency of marriage between those who have grown up together, the relegation of parental responsibility, the relation of discipline and freedom, and the elimination of jealousy. It opens up the widest problems of sex and marriage; and even though Muria society may not provide solutions, it does at least put the questions.

The ghotul does not yield up its secrets readily. It is easy enough to obtain a superficial knowledge of its organization, but the Muria have no conscience at all about misleading the inquirer, and it is almost routine for them to give incorrect information at first. They invariably deny—if you ask them questions—that chelik and motiari have intimate relations; they told Grigson that girls never slept in the ghotul of the Narayanpur Tahsil; I have often been wearied by their lies. Every statement must be weighed and checked; the anthropologist has to be both a detective and a magistrate; he must be ready to follow the slightest clue, but he must test with the greatest care the evidence that is put before him. 123

We must not blame the Muria for their reticence. It is the natural and proper barrier set up against prying eyes; it is their ultimate refuge against the inroads of civilization. Moreover chelik and motiari are bound to secrecy, to conceal everything not only from the stranger but from their own relatives, when they are admitted to the ghotul fellowship.

How then was it possible to gather the vast amount of detailed information presented in this book? The answer is simple; the Muria cannot resist affection. They are the most friendly people in the world—once you have learnt how to set about them. They immediately respond to respect. For years they have been scolded, peered at, ridiculed by every visitor to their villages; their first reaction to a newcomer is naturally to throw up a barrier of reticence and falsehood. But directly they find that the visitor knows something about them and likes what he knows, there is a wonderful change and he is overwhelmed with intimacies.

I first visited the Muria country in 1935, and repeated my visits for several years till 1942. In 1940 I was appointed Census Officer of Bastar State and a little later Honorary Ethnographer with the status of a Head of a Department—a position that greatly facilitated my inquiries. In an Appendix I give a list of all the ghotul in the State, and note those that I visited personally and what I saw. I have also recorded those which I was not able to visit myself, but about which I believe I have exact and authentic information—information collected by more than one of my colleagues and which has stood the test of check and counter-check. It seems to me essential that an ethnographer should present his credentials in as precise a manner as possible and should confess his failures. I must admit, for example, that I have not lived in the Muria area during the rains. I have personally witnessed, however, at least samples of everything described in the book, and the total number of ghotul visited comes to no fewer than 347. 14

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FOREWORD

It is a privilege to me to write this foreword to Verrier Elwin's book *Maria Murder and Suicide* and to be associated in this way with a man whose great work for the aboriginal of Middle India has made his name known wherever two or three are gathered together to think of India's duty towards her oldest inhabitants, the men of the malaria-belt, the forests and the hills. To his social and philanthropic work he has now added sympathetic and revealing anthropological work of the first order, recording while there is yet time to do so the still distinctive ways of life and culture of many sections of India's twenty-five and a half million tribal population. His researches are providing a scientific basis not merely for social work among the tribes, but above all for the great and complex task of administering the tribal areas in the tribesman's interests. The programme of any wise administration for these areas should be not only to enable the tribesman to hold his own in the world without losing his way of life, his virtues, his dancing, his songs and his laughter, but also, once he has been secured freedom from fear, from want, and from interference, to make his own special contribution to the free India that is to be. That contribution may well be a restoration to the drab village life of the plains of freedom from the puritan and the kill-joy, and the revival of what Mr Elwin in his pamphlet *The Aboriginals*[1] has referred to as the 'art of recreation, an art which is lamentably absent from the ordinary Indian village'. That pamphlet is commended to all who desire to get a clear and sane picture of the whole tribal problem; it states both the creed of one of the finest and best-equipped minds now at work upon the problem, and the case for the scientific approach to it.

To one who has served in Bastar State it must always be a pleasure to read or write anything that will carry his mind back to that beautiful land and its peoples or

[1] *Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs*, No. 14 (Bombay, 1943).

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114 contribute to the greater understanding of them. 'Pleasure' may seem inappropriate of a book whose title contains the words 'murder' and 'suicide': but it is the fundamental purpose of the book that should be borne in mind, its desire to reveal the psychology underlying the 'crimes' of violence committed by one of the finest and least spoiled of Indian tribes, and the circumstances that drive its men and women to suicide. Such work can only lead to a wiser handling of the aboriginal accused by the judge or magistrate; and it raises acutely the question of punishment and the prison treatment of tribal convicts. The opening thirty-six pages of the book moreover give a vivid summary of Maria life, even in so short a compass revealing various facets that escaped me in the field-work and enquiries which preceded the writing of my book *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*.[1] In my preface to that book I expressed the hope that other books would be written about the Maria, correcting and supplementing my statements by more systematic field-work and that my book would tempt trained workers to visit the ethnologically unexplored lands of Bastar and Jeypore. Mr Elwin will agree, I think, that it was talks with me that moved him to visit Bastar, where like many others he has fallen a victim to the beauty and interest of that State.

This short book is the firstfruits of his Bastar researches; although, its subject being what it is, it cannot compare for delight and scientific thrill with his forthcoming *magnum opus, The Muria and their Ghotul*, to me it is of particular interest, both because I was myself the Sessions Judge who tried twelve[2] of the hundred cases summarized in the Appendix and because the book is founded, independently, on an idea I long entertained of a similar book based on an examination of all available sessions trial and other records available from 1915 to 1930. I still have the notes which I prepared on some of these cases, including all those dealt with in this book for the years 1920-30 and fourteen others; and I summarized my general experiences of murder in Bastar in pages 94-5 and 226 of *The Maria Gonds*

[1] Oxford University Press, 1938.

[2] Nos 6, 7, 12, 26, 27, 38, 39, 45, 57, 62, 78 and 83; the murder in No 69 also took place in my time but the trial came after I had left Bastar as the accused had absconded.

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of Bastar. To this study of previous records I was led by my realization, after a year's experience of original and appellate work in Bastar, of the great difficulty of applying to the decision of charges against tribal offenders the general practice as to the appreciation of evidence, court procedure, the assessment of guilt and the imposition of penalties laid down in the commentaries on the Evidence Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Penal Code, all of which had been imposed on the tribal and other areas of Bastar, as of the whole Central Provinces (in which Bastar State was then included), without any thought that any section in these enactments, framed for sophisticated India on European models, might perhaps not suit every part of India. I should have been saved many moments of anxiety as to the justice of my decisions and as to the whole trend of criminal justice in the State had I had at my command so full a study of murder and suicide as Mr Elwin's book, which not only analyses so many actual cases but also links up the results with the conclusions of standard works on crime, penology, psychology and ethnology.

I can almost completely endorse Mr Elwin's analysis of the general causes of Maria murders, though the concept in Chapter XI of fatigue as a cause of crime is one of those things that is startlingly revealing, but has only to be stated to be appreciated as true. Moreover I should perhaps plead guilty to having given currency to what he speaks of (p. 42) as 'the myth that landa rice-beer is the most important cause of homicide', by writing that 'about half the Bison-horn murders are committed in landa intoxication'.[1] His figures on page 139 show that only 13 of his 100 murder cases were influenced by landa and 6 by other intoxicant liquors. In the further 14 cases of which I still have notes landa intoxication caused 2 murders, and other intoxicants 3. In the earlier years of Bastar's political association with the Central Provinces drunkenness was probably an even more frequent cause of crime, or perhaps a symptom rather than a cause, since often landa or liquor was taken by persons brooding over grievances, and thinking of violent action. It may be of interest to classify these 14 murders

[1] *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, p. 94.

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114 674 according to Mr Elwin's categories. Apart from the five intoxication murders, two were prompted by belief that crops had been bewitched, one was a fatigue crime and one was caused by a dispute as to property, one by resentment over being dunned for a debt of one anna and one by a quarrel over failure to repair the skins of a drum broken by a friend who had borrowed it, while three were the result of conjugal infidelity. There were three cases in which the villagers agreed to conceal the crime to avoid the trouble of police and court investigation. The means employed included assault with an axe, a sword, a fencing pole, a stick, a wooden stool and fists, kicking, throttling, shooting with bow and arrow, twisting of neck and stabbing with a knife. In one case the accused committed suicide to avoid the disgrace attendant on the revival of an old scandal caused by his son's association with a blacksmith girl whose murder he and the villagers had hushed up for three years.

114 776 754 Of witchcraft and magic as factors in crime Mr Elwin has written fully in Chapter V, and has illustrated at page 61 a typical clan-god, Anga Pen or Pat Deo (log-god), sometimes used to detect witches in the manner described at page 17, while at pages 185-6 he deals with the Maria view that a witch or a sorcerer should be killed. That view is undoubtedly widely held outside tribal circles, and the power of tribal log-gods to detect black magic is equally strongly believed in by Hindu and Muslim subjects of the State. The reaction of tribal beliefs and practices on the local Hindu rites and ceremonies is very marked, and an example of this is the way in which Raja Bhairon Deo, the great-grandfather of the present Maharaja of Bastar, installed in Jagdalpur a log-god which was either a copy of a famous log-god from Narayanpur in the north-west of the State, or, according to its present Halba Pujari, was brought by a former ruler from Dongar, the old capital, to Narayanpur, and shifted thence by Raja Bhairon Deo. This god is now the Pat Deo of Bastar *par excellence*, and four ceremonies are held in his honour during the Maharaja's Dassara celebrations. His witch-finding function strongly survives, and I well remember my amused astonishment when in 1927 during an inspection of the accounts of the Jagdalpur Temples managed by the State Court of Wards I found

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that the villagers around Jagdalpur frequently requisitioned his services for this purpose, paying for them a fee of Rs 5 into the State Treasury. When I wondered whether by lending the log-god the Court of Wards had not been accessory to the killing or beating of witches, the Pujari thus explained the god's conformity to modern law: 'Pat Deo is worshipped to save men from *bhut* and *pret*, and detects *bhut*, *churel* and witches. If a village needs his detective services, the villagers pay into the Treasury a fee of Rs 5, and then the Manager lets me take the god out. I walk behind Pat Deo, who is carried on the shoulders of four men, none of whom must come from the village which needs his help. Starting from the east side, we take him round the village widdershins, and then enter the village, Pat Deo himself impelling the bearers and then knocking against the house where the evil is hidden or against the actual magician. He will not leave the house till the guilty one comes out. Then in these days the offender kneels before Pat Deo and cries for forgiveness, which is given before Pat Deo goes home; he is not even outcasted now. In my grandfather's time he would have been set on an ass with his face towards the tail and taken in procession round the village; his head would then have been shaved, his front teeth pulled out by a Ghasia, and his hair and teeth buried in an ant-hill, while he would have been excommunicated and driven out of his village. They pulled out his teeth to stop him using them to suck blood and because without them he could not pronounce his spells.' One may be pardoned for scepticism as to the affair even in modern days being closed with Pat Deo kindly forgiving the magician!

This fear of magic as the source of illness and all troubles is strong in many parts of India. Here in Hyderabad belief in the power of *bhanamatti* or black magic is widespread, even among some persons of the highest education and social standing. A detailed investigation was made in 1916 by Mr L. B. Goad, an experienced officer of the Indian Police, then in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department. His conclusion was that *bhanamatti* was so absolute a scourge in parts of Hyderabad and so utilized as a form of blackmail by its practitioners that special measures were

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needed to root them out. The evils which he found to have been inflicted on the victims in a series of cases investigated included loss of consciousness, barking and howling like jackals, appearance of black marks on various parts of the body, giddiness with great abdominal pain, setting of the jaws whilst the victim beat the air and ground with hands and feet, immodest and uncontrollable dancing like a prostitute, ape-like antics, violent laughing and hysteria, clothes dropping off the body, vomiting and spitting out of stones, gravel, marking-nuts, needles, thorns and lemons, food turning into excreta, loss of speech, cessation of menstrual periods or their continuance for weeks and months on end, and many others. His report concluded: 'I trust that this report of mine may have the desired effect of proving that the existing state of affairs in those tracts in which *bhanamatti* is prevalent requires special measures to deal with the present evil. If this is not done the populace will take the law into their own hands, as they have done in more than one instance in the recent past, and as they threatened to do when the District Magistrate of Bidar took action in Bidar City with a commendably strong and firm hand last autumn. Having personally witnessed the dreadful trials which women and girls have to suffer under the scourge of *bhanamatti*, I should not hesitate, did the power lie in my hands, to extend the operations of the Criminal Tribes Act to every cowardly blackguard who was known to practise the vile cult of *bhanamatti*.' Even now the Hyderabad District Police retain the services of an official versed in the art of treating the victims of *bhanamatti*. Most of its practitioners are persons of the untouchable castes, but the victims in the 1916 Bidar 'epidemic' of *bhanamatti* included persons of all ranks and professions, even lawyers. Murders of suspected practitioners[1] continue in Hyderabad. Is it to be wondered at that this fear of magic is so common a cause of murder amongst the Maria? It is after all not so long since in Great Britain an Act of Parliament passed in 1736 finally stopped prosecutions for alleged witchcraft.[2] Mr Elwin has pointed out on page 80

[1] Two were reported in the *Times of India* of 5 May 1933.
[2] A useful brief summary of British witchcraft history and folklore is given in Chapter X of *English Folklore* by Christina Hole (London, 1940).

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that the European superstitions as to crime go far beyond the superstitions of the Maria, and mentions in particular the 'Hand of Glory' ideas; it may be of interest to reproduce an English recipe for making, using and counteracting a Hand of Glory given by Francis Grose in *A Provincial Glossary, with a collection of Local Proverbs and Popular Superstitions*, published in 1787[1]:—

> Take the hand left or right of a person hanged, and exposed on the highway; wrap it up in a piece of a shroud, or winding-sheet, in which let it be well squeezed, to get out any small quantity of blood that may have remained in it; then put it into an earthen vessel, with zimat, saltpetre, salt, and long pepper, the whole well powdered; leave it fifteen days in that vessel; afterwards take it out, and expose it to the noon-tide sun in the dog-days, till it is thoroughly dry: and if the sun is not sufficient, put it into an oven heated with fern and vervain: then compose a kind of candle with the fat of a hanged man, virgin wax, and sisame of Lapland. The Hand of Glory is used as a candlestick, to hold this candle when lighted. Its properties are, that whersoever anyone goes with this dreadful instrument, the persons to whom it is presented will be deprived of all power of motion. . . . The Hand of Glory would cease to take effect, and thieves could not make use of it, if the threshold of the door of the house by which they might enter, were anointed with an unguent composed of the gall of a black cat, the fat of a white hen, and the blood of a screech-owl; which mixture must necessarily be prepared during the dog-days.

Particular attention should be paid to what Mr Elwin has to say in Chapter XVII about the aboriginal prisoner. Whether in Bastar, the Central Provinces or in Hyderabad, I have never felt happy over the subjection of the aboriginal convict to ordinary jail life. Seventeen of the persons convicted in the hundred cases of the Appendix are shown as having died in jail, though, as jails in India go, the Jagdalpur jail was always good. Mr Elwin has summarized the reasons for the Maria's hatred of jail life, and all who have to handle the aboriginal convict should read, mark, learn and inwardly

[1] I owe the quotation to my brother Geoffrey Grigson's anthology *The Romantics* (London, 1942). p. 95.

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digest his words. I have always felt that Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code, which prescribes the penalty for murder, is inadequate in the case of aboriginals, in its recognition of degrees of murder; transportation for life, i.e. life imprisonment, even as reduced by modern practice as to the periodic review of sentences and earned remission, is an intolerable punishment for the average Maria murderer whose crime is committed in a sudden fit of anger and is unpremeditated. Fortunately in the old days such Sessions sentences had to be confirmed by the Political Agent who could also act on the Judge's recommendation to reduce the sentences in the exercise of the royal clemency; this accounts for the frequent reductions of sentences shown in the Appendix as having been ordered in appeal. Let us hope that the new combined High Court for the Eastern States will take as realistic and humane a view of this as the political officers have done, and in their handling of the aboriginal criminal shed the preconceptions and prejudices of the bar and bench of 'civilized' India. The same approach to the imprisonment of the aboriginal is needed in less heinous cases also, and the principle should be, whenever possible, not to send the aboriginal to jail—at least until there are special jails for aboriginals; too often used the Central Provinces jails to be full of unfortunate aboriginal illicit distillers or smugglers. The Central Provinces courts have now begun to realize the undesirability of jailing aboriginals and the need of discretion in inflicting fines proportionate to their slender means; but few policemen and magistrates realize the social cost to the released convict or the acquitted prisoner of the *hathkari dand* (handcuff penalty), and the cost of the ceremony for purging him from the defilement of the jail or lock-up described in pages 195-9. I have always regretted that I was never able in Bastar to experiment with the idea that came to me towards the end of my service there, of a village or camp jail, such as is suggested in the concluding chapter of this book. I see nothing impossible in this, nor in letting the aboriginal prisoner have his singing and dancing, observe his festivals and propitiate his gods; even after a time he might, on promotion to a separate personal hut and holding, be allowed the company of his wife. Agriculture and

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horticulture would be the ideal occupations in such a jail village, for the average aboriginal remains an agricultural novice.

As to the death sentence there is little to add to Mr Elwin's remarks in Chapter XVIII. Murder and violence were far more frequent in Bastar in the past than they have been since 1910, the Rebellion year, and at one time executions were carried out publicly in Pargana headquarters for deterrent reasons. This possibly had some effect on the vendetta and the bully. My own practice was to impose the death sentence only in cases of premeditated murder or murder with robbery. The very formidable and steady increase of murders and attempted murders in Hyderabad State ever since the virtual suspension of capital punishment is a warning against removal of the fear of death. And though death may be asked for by an occasional Maria in preference to long years of prison, its finality and grimness are realized even by them, and recognized at times as the only appropriate penalty. This happened when I sentenced Marvi Aita of Paknar (H. Case No 45) to death. The whole trial was impressive. I held it at Paknar, travelling there in the first motor car to use a newly made forest road and followed by a bus bringing assessors, counsel, accused and police escort; we were held up in the few villages through which we passed so that the *perma* and elders might sacrifice cocks and sprinkle blood on the car and bus wheels. The accused had been the village bully, and after the trial, which had added drama from taking place on the actual spot where Aita had deliberately shot Kamlu Masa dead with an arrow as he and his helper neighbours were bringing home his kodon harvest, when I had pronounced sentence, the entire village filed before me to touch my feet in gratitude for freeing them from the perpetual menace of Aita's bullying, and it was then only that I learnt that he had been wrongly acquitted by a former Diwan on a previous murder charge and had been guilty also of yet another killing which the village had been afraid to report.

Let me conclude this Foreword by warmly recommending the book to all whose duties bring them into contact with the aboriginal, though it is so to speak only a study

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127 these were not kept at the headquarters of the State, but
121 distributed in the police stations and many of them had been eliminated. But the State Superintendent of Police called in as many aboriginal files as could be found, and again after much sifting I found myself with exactly 50 unselected Bison-horn Maria suicide records. These extended over a period of 10 years.

114 Between 1935 and 1942 I made many tours in this enchanting land among these enchanting people. On the earlier tours I was accompanied by my friend Mr Shamrao Hivale whose amazing sympathy and insight helped me to catch my first vision of Maria culture. Later I had the support of my wife who, being herself a Gond, was able to get quickly in touch with the people and immediately established a friendly atmosphere. Particularly in the later tours I tried to see as many scenes of violence as possible, to talk to released convicts and to discover the general attitude of a village towards any crime that had been committed within its boundaries. In Aranpur I stood beside the still warm ashes of the ritually-cremated clothes of Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged in jail. At Khutepal, I watched Oyami Masa's children playing on the very floor once stained by the blood of his murdered wife. In the forest near Jabeli [211] I had a clearing made so that I could photograph the carved pillar erected in memory of a famous murderer. In Rewali I was visited by a ferocious-looking youth who had twice stood on trial for his life and had twice preserved it. Here too I talked with Hemla Bakka who killed his wife for infidelity and was now unable to get another. In Doriras I saw the grave of the murdered Boti which had been desecrated by [164] Ghasia for the sake of the purse of money which had been buried to help the dead man on his journey to the other world. In the same village I visited the home of Kawasi Borga then serving a life sentence, and talked to his fine sons and his sad pathetic wife.

124 Later I spent many hours in the Jagdalpur Jail talking to Maria who were serving terms of life-imprisonment for homicide. Some of them were as informative as the limits of their psychology allowed, for it must always be remembered that aboriginals are not accustomed to discussing those matters which are of special interest to anthropologists. Other

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prisoners clearly suspected some trick and told me very little. On the whole I was impressed by the great sadness of their life, even though in the jail they are well and kindly treated. Most of them, I think, felt that an inexplicable tragedy had befallen them. They did not feel like criminals. Their lives had been destroyed by a capricious destiny.

It was naturally more difficult to get information about the suicides, for, in the nature of the case, the person of most interest could not be present to tell his story. Relatives also and the villagers were more reticent, I thought, in discussing this subject, possibly because they feared that any revelations might lead to further police investigation. But even so I was able to get a certain amount of information about the Maria's attitude to self-murder.

But enquiries among the Maria are never easy. The people say that, as a result of Mr Grigson's investigations when he was writing his book on the tribe, their villages have suffered an invasion of man-eating tigers. In one village where I myself took photographs it was declared afterwards that I had made all the women barren. The Maria are friendly people, and I was able to make many friends among them. But particularly on matters which have a police reference they are naturally inclined to be secretive and prefer to claim ignorance rather than by confiding in the investigator perhaps expose themselves to later difficulties. Moreover, there is undoubtedly throughout aboriginal India a belief that talking about tribal affairs may anger the ancestors of the clan or disturb some godling's peace of mind. It is said of Korava children, members of a criminal tribe in Mysore, that they are taught from infancy to say 'I do not know' in reply to questions put to them.[1] Many Maria adopt the same attitude.

The presence of my wife, whom everyone (incorrectly) regarded as a Maria but who has a Maria name, was of great assistance in removing suspicion, as was the fortunate chance that I always go barefoot in the villages. I learnt later that the Maria believe that one reason why the crops are so poor nowadays is that officials defile Mother Earth by trampling on her with their shoes. 'At first,' they said, 'when anyone

[1] L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes* (Mysore, 1930), Vol. III, p. 612.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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crossed a field in shoes a tiger ate him, but now the god which possessed the tiger only ruins our crops.' Even though I made the human women barren, therefore, I did not injure the fertility of Mother Earth!

I do not suggest that in this book I have discovered anything new. But the transition from a social order where everything was settled by the tribe to a state of affairs where everything is settled by outsiders and nothing at all by the tribe, is of obvious interest. The tragedies described here throw light on many aspects of tribal life, and are specially valuable as indicating what things are emotionally disturbing to the Maria mind. When we read a monograph on a tribe, its whole life is laid out before us. Some things are interesting and exciting to the reader, but it is not always easy to discover what is interesting to the people themselves. Supplementary studies like this help us to appreciate the actual realities of, for example, a polygamous household or the real difficulties of the serving-marriage. The impact of witchcraft on the minds of the people, the extent of their attachment to property, their jealousy and desire for revenge are vividly illustrated here.

The value of such a study as this is not, however, only for the student. As the tribal areas are opened up, and as the aboriginals come more and more into touch with the outside world, it will become ever more essential for administrators and magistrates to understand tribal mentality. It is hard enough sometimes to understand any kind of aboriginal action. There is nothing more baffling than aboriginal crime. The Courts are all too ready to save time and energy by accepting a plea of drunkenness as an explanation of what seems incomprehensible. Undoubtedly a proportion of aboriginal crime, like the crime of civilized people, is due to alcohol. But I do not believe the proportion is large and there is reason to suppose that the plea of drunkenness so frequently put forward is often suggested to the accused by his advisers.

The importance of anthropological knowledge for the proper evaluation of aboriginal crime hardly needs illustration. One of the most difficult things that a Court has to decide in a case of homicide is whether the deed that it is evaluating comes under any of the Exceptions to Section 300 of the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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I.P.C. Was the crime premeditated? Was it provoked by a serious and unbearable insult? The difficulty here, which every Sessions Judge admits, is that what seems an extreme provocation to him or the Assessors may hardly be noticed by the aboriginal, and incidents that seem quite trifling to the 'civilized' mind may rouse the Maria or Naga to a fit of homicidal rage. The matter is complicated by the fact that the tribes vary greatly from one to another. The Bison-horn Maria, for example, are passionately concerned about female chastity, and a wife's infidelity is constantly a cause of murder. But in this their Gond and Baiga neighbours to the north have a much lower standard. Love is comparatively free. Divorce is easy and a wife's betrayal is readily compensated by the payment of a small fine. It is obvious, therefore, that a Gond or Baiga who suspects his wife of infidelity is not put to anything like the same degree of provocation as that suffered by a Bison-horn Maria under similar circumstances.

Premeditation may be indicated by tribal customs. The Bison-horn Maria express the spirit of implacable revenge by certain dramatic symbols. They pull out their pubic hairs; they remove a few handfuls of grass from an enemy's roof; they whistle loudly the dreaded *sui* whistle. In any case where an accused is proved to have indulged in one or other of these acts, it may be assumed that his crime was premeditated.

A Bastar tragedy, the murder of Tati Hirme by her deceased husband's younger brother Doga, provides an interesting example of how a knowledge of local custom can explain an otherwise meaningless crime. According to tribal practice a younger brother has a right over his elder brother's widow, a right which extends not only to her person, but to her property. This right Tati Hirme refused to Doga, and there is evidence that for a long time the youth bitterly resented her behaviour. On the day of the tragedy he went to her house and asked her for some tobacco. She refused, and he murdered her.

At first sight here is precisely one of those motiveless crimes which have so often puzzled outside observers. It is true that there was hostility between the parties, but the refusal of a small gift of tobacco was hardly sufficient for so disastrous a result. But in Maria practice to ask a woman

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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CHAPTER TWO

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

I

The so-called Maria of Bastar fall naturally into two divisions distinguished by many details of culture and tradition, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains and the Bison-horn Maria living to the south of the Indrawati River. A full account of both these tribes has been given by W. V. Grigson, and his book should be read by those who wish to have a fuller background of Maria life than the present volume can supply. In this chapter I will only give a brief summary of the life and customs of the Bison-horn Maria.

The Bison-horn Maria, who are distinguished from the other aboriginals of Bastar by the splendid head-dress they use for their marriage dances, numbered about 156,000 in 1931, and I estimate their present strength at about 175,000. They are distributed all over southern Bastar, among the entrancing hills of Dantewara, in the dry forests of Bijapur, among the hot but lovely lowlands of Konta, in the remote Sukma and Kutru Zamindaris. On the borders of the main Maria stock are a number of communities which really belong to it, the Koya of the extreme south, the Dorla who claim to be a superior caste and the mixed population along the banks of the Indrawati and reaching up towards the Muria country beyond Barsur. The Dorla and Koya dance in Bison-horn Maria fashion; the mixed people to the north combine the customs of the Hill Maria with their own. In the neighbourhood of Jagdalpur, the Maria gradually lose their distinctiveness as they approach the town and merge into the southern Muria.

There are few people in India more attractive than the Bison-horn Maria, physically charming, of good stature, perfect figure, finely featured with carefully tended hair, often a lovely golden-brown in colour. Both men and women are very strong; the men can carry heavy loads great distances, endure long and arduous hunting expeditions and dance all night bearing their great drums. Their health is fairly good, but they are afflicted with yaws, though the work of the

[P. 11]

4: Führer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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compliance with Hindu customs, and "Raj-Gond" reform movements have made their appearance in the Central Provinces.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the distinction between Raj Gonds and the other sections of the Gond peoples. C. B. Lucie-Smith writing of the Raj Gonds of Chanda suggested that either "the epithet Raj was originally applied to royal and noble Gond families, from which the distinction spread to their followers and the governing class generally; or it may describe the leading Gond tribe which in ancient days conquered the land from other aboriginal clans."[1] But Captain Forsyth believed that Raj Gonds are in many cases the descendants of alliances between Rajput adventurers and Gonds, and R. V. Russell quotes this view with qualified approval.[2]

W. V. Grigson on the other hand lays emphasis rather on the social than the historical causes for the distinction and suggests that such names as Raj Gond arose from "the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names."[3] The situation in Adilabad seems rather to accord with the second suggestion advanced by Lucie-Smith; for here the Raj Gonds do not form a ruling class or even a class of privileged economic status, but an entire tribal group comprising all strata of society from the feudal chiefs down to the poorest labourer. We will see in a later chapter that the once powerful Gond Kings of Chanda belonged to this group, and their kinsmen in the Adilabad hills were as early as the 17th century referred to as Raj Gonds in patents of the Emperor Aurangzeb.

Here the Raj Gonds, far from aspiring to inclusion in the Hindu fold, consider themselves the true exponents of Gond culture and Gond language, and above all of the traditional Gond religion which involves the sacrifice of cows at the rites for the clan-gods. Many of them have never met a Dhurwe Gond, but those who have come in contact with the few groups of Dhurwe Gonds who have recently drifted across the Chanda border, look down upon them as speaking a corrupt form of Gondi intermixed with much Marathi, and as following different customs; somewhat sweepingly and apparently unjustly they assert that the Dhurwe Gonds have no cult of clan deities "only worshipping Bhimana like Kolams."

It seems indeed that the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, who have lived for almost a century and a half under Muslim rule, and have in consequence been less exposed to the influence of the more intolerant exponents of Hinduism, have retained more of their old culture than

1. *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District. Central Provinces.* 1869. Nagpur 1870, p. 46.
2. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India.* London 1916. Vol. III. p. 63.
3. W. V. Grigson. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar.* London. 1938 p. 36.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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175 on the economic and social position of the Gonds were far reaching, and the repercussions attendant on the opening up of the District will be discussed in Book II,[4] while reference to the newly established culture-contacts with non-aboriginal immigrants from both Telingana and Marathwara are contained in Chapter III.

162 In 1941 the Gonds of Hyderabad numbered 141,335, which is only a fraction of India's entire Gond population of more than 3,000,000. If we remember that this is about ten times the strength of the aboriginal population of the Australian continent at the time of discovery, and far exceeds in numbers the Red Indians in North America, it is indeed surprising to find only a slender volume of literature on this remarkable group of peoples.

114 The first reference to the Gonds in scientific literature is perhaps the small list of Gondi words communicated in 1844 by Dr. Voysey to the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.[2] A somewhat larger one, together with a few grammatical notes was given in 1847 by Dr. O. Manager,[2] and the following year B. H. Hodgson published in the same journal a comparative vocabulary of Dravidian dialects containing among others Gondi and Oraon words.[3] Fuller, though by no means complete, are the grammar and vocabulary of the Gondi spoken in the Chindwara District, compiled by the Rev. James Dawson in 1872.[4]

But the earliest ethnological account of the Gonds is contained in the Rev. Stephen Hislop's remarkable *Papers on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*, edited by Sir R. Temple in 1866.[5] This book, though somewhat confusing in the presentation of material, is a mine of information for the initiated, and will be of permanent value for its very full version of a cycle of Gond myths both in Gondi and English. Fairly lengthy notes on various sections of Gonds are found in the administrative reports and papers of several of Hislop's contemporaries, notably Captain C. I. R. Glasfurd,[6] Major C. B. Lucie-Smith,[7] Sir R. Temple,[8] Sir C. Grant,[9] and Col. Ward,[10] but the information contained in these is of very uneven character. The next impor-

1. Vol. XIII. p. 19.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI. p. 286.
3. "The Aborigines of Central India," *ibid.*, Vol. XVII, Part I, pp. 550—558.
4. *Ibid.* Vol. XXXIX, pp. 108—117, 172—198.
5. Nagpur 1866.
6. *Report on the Dependency of Bastar*. 1862, Selection from Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department No. XXXIX, Calcutta 1863.—*Report on Land Revenue Settlement of Upper Godavari District*, Nagpur 1868.
7. *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Chanda District*, Nagpur 1870.
8. *Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces up to August 1862*. (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.—*Report on the Zamindaris and other Petty Chiefdoms in the Central Provinces in 1863* (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.
9. *Gazetteer of the Central Provinces*, Nagpur 1876.
10. Mandla Settlement Report 1868.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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tant contribution to the ethnology of the Gonds were the articles by the Rev. J. Cain, who spent a lifetime among the Koyas of the Godavari valley and published reliable, though limited information on their culture and their peculiar dialect, which is strongly influenced by Telugu.[1]

After the publication of these pioneer works interest in the Gonds waned and except for some useful notes in Captain J. Forsyth's *The Highlands of Central India*,[2] the usual paragraphs on population in various District Gazetteers published in the early years of the 20th century, and in the Census of India, 1901, little of any relevance was written on the tribe during the next fifty years. Then followed the publication of Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, which contains in Volume IV,[3] a discussion of the position of Gondi among the Dravidian languages, and of E. Thurston's *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*[4] with a useful article on the Koyas. More complete than any previous account of Gonds is R. V. Russell's article 'Gond' in *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*[5] but even this suffers to some extent from the faults of all such compilations, and, though full of interesting details, fails to draw a clear distinction between the individual Gond tribes.

C. G. Chevenix Trench's *Grammar of Gondi*,[6] on the other hand, is a work of great thoroughness and is as yet the most systematic description of a Gondi dialect. While confined to the language of Betul and the surrounding area, it is also a useful guide to the study of other Gondi dialects, and its collection of legends, stories and songs lends it considerable ethnological value.

Another approach to the Gond problem was made by C. U. Wills, the author of *The Raj-Gond Maharajas of the Satpura Hills*[7] and the *Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Mediaeval Chattisgarh*.[8] Wills' writings are mainly based on early Mohammedan sources, and throughout his history of the Gond states of the Central Provinces, he relies only on the authority of written documents, excluding, as it would seem consciously, all ethnological material. His book on the Raj-Gond Maharajas, while an excellent compilation of old records, suffers there-

1. "The Bhadrachalam Taluka, Godavari District, S. India." *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V. 1876.—"The Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli Talukas." *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VIII. 1879, and Vol. X. 1881.—"The Koi a Southern Tribe of the Gond." *Journal Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Vol. XIII. 1881.

2. New edition, London 1889.—Forsyth gives in this book a poetical version of the Lingo myth which is based on Hislop's text.

3. *Munda and Dravidian Languages*. Calcutta 1906.

4. Madras 1909.

5. London 1916. Vol. III, pp. 39-143.

6. Madras 1919.

7. Nagpur 1913.

8. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Vol. XV. 1919, pp. 197-262.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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fore from a certain one-sidedness; it does not, for instance, give even the clan-names of the Gond rajas of Garha-Mandla, Deogarh and Chanda.

The Census reports of 1931 contain various useful notes on the Gonds,[1] and among them a detailed description of the Muria's dormitory-system by W. V. Grigson. But it was not until 1938 that the same author gave us with his book *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*[2] the first full-scale monograph on any section of the Gond race. In the Introduction to this important volume, which puts the Bastar Gonds at last on the ethnographic map, J. H. Hutton expresses astonishment " that Indian administrators and British anthropologists should have had to wait a century for any detailed authoritative account of the Gonds of Central India." This sentiment must be shared by all who consider that during that same century numerous ethnological and anthropological expeditions passed the shores of India on their way to the Malayan Archipelago, the South Sea Islands and Australia, all of which are to-day ethnologically far better known than the mainland of India. " What one regrets most," continues Professor Hutton, " is that an early study of the Gonds might have prevented much suffering and many misfortunes, at least, that is, if it had led to the taking of measures in their interests such as Mr. Grigson was able to initiate in Bastar State during the term of his office there as Administrator and Diwan."

Grigson's book stimulated further research among Gonds both inside and outside Bastar, and recent years have seen the publication of various articles and papers by D. N. Majumdar[3] and M. P. Buradkar[4] and of an excellent grammar of the Maria language by A. N. Mitchell.[5] But by far the most important contribution to Gond studies since the publication of Grigson's monograph has come from Verrier Elwin. Already his earlier popular books[6] have given us a vivid picture of the Gonds of the Central Provinces, while his monographs *The Baiga* and *The Agaria*[7] contain many references to Gond custom. *Maria Murder and Suicide*[8] is a fascinating account of Gond life and death in Bastar,

1. 'Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces,' *Census of India* 1931, Vol. I, Part III, Section B.—W. H. Shoobert, *ibidem*, Vol. XII, Central Provinces and Berar, Part I, Report.

2. London, 1938.

3. *Tribal Cultures and Acculturation*, Presidential Address, Anthropology Section of the Indian Science Congress, 1939.—'Racial Affiliations of the Gonds of the Central Provinces,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal*, Vol. VII, 1941, pp. 35-56.

4. 'Totemism among the Gonds.' *Man in India*, Vol. XX, 1940, pp. 114-143, 268-289.—Kinship among the Gonds,' *Nagpur University Journal*, 1940, No. 6, pp. 147-160.

5. *A Grammar of Maria Gondi*, Jagdalpur 1942.

6. *Leaves from the Jungle*, London 1936;—*Phulmat of the Hills, a tale of the Gonds*, London 1937;—*A Cloud that's Dragonish*, London 1938.

7. Bombay 1942.

8. Bombay 1943.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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and many of Elwin's recent articles deal partly or entirely with Gonds.[1] Numerous specimens of the oral literature of Gondwana are recorded in Elwin's excellent collections *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* and *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*[2] and Shamrao Hivale, the co-author of the latter book, has made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Gond culture by his monograph *The Parāthans of the Upper Narbhada Valley*.[3] But the most important work so far written on any Gond tribe is Verrier Elwin's monumental volume, *The Muria and their Gotul*.[4]

Grigson's and Elwin's great monographs both deal with the Gonds of Bastar, and no comparable account exists of the Raj Gonds of the Central Provinces and Hyderabad.[5] While perhaps less colourful than the hill-folks of Bastar, they occupy so important and central a position among the Gondi speaking tribes that lacking a detailed knowledge of Raj Gond culture and tradition we seem far from a solution of the Gond problem.

It was this idea which first led me to the study of the Raj Gonds in the country between the Godavari and the Penganga. When I had completed my work among the Hill Reddis of the Eastern Ghats it might have seemed logical to embark on a study of the Koyas, who are the immediate neighbours of the Reddis both on the Hyderabad and on the British side of the Godavari. For this would have rounded off the work among those aboriginal tribes of the Nizam's Dominions which lie entirely within the Telugu sphere. But judging from my limited experience of Koyas, both Gondi and Telugu speaking, I felt that it would be difficult to understand their cultural life without some knowledge of Gond culture in an area less exposed to the influence of a dominant alien civilization. So I turned northwards to where the Adilabad District, with its more than 70,000 Gonds, promised a rich field for ethnological research. I hoped that a study of these Gonds would lead more directly to the heart of the Gond problem than work among the Koyas on the periphery of the Gondi speaking area.

In December 1941 my wife and I arrived in Asifabad and undertook an informative tour through the three taluqs Asifabad, Utnur and Rajura. Travelling on foot westwards through the Pedda Vagu valley as far as Kerimeri we gained a first impression of villages where Gonds

1. 'I married a Gond,' *Man in India*, Vol. XX, 1940, pp. 228-255;—'Primitive Ideas on Menstruation and the Climacteric in Central India,' in *Essays in Anthropology presented to R. B. Sarat Chandra Roy*, Lucknow 1942, pp. 141—157.—'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Bengal*, Vol. IX., 1943, pp. 99-148.—'The Attitude of Indian Aboriginals to Sexual Impotence,' *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII, 1943, pp. 127-146—'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods,' *Man*, Vol. XLIII, 1943, pp. 97-104.—'Stilt-Walking among the Murias of Bastar State,' *Man* Vol. XLIV, 1944, pp. 38-41.

2. Bombay 1944.

3. Bombay 1945.

4. Bombay 1947.

5. Syed Siraj-ul-Hasan's *The Castes and Tribes of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions* (Bombay 1920) contains only a brief article on the Raj Gonds of Adilabad District, pp. 216-232.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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114 live side by side with Kolams as well as with non-aboriginal settlers, then climbed to the higher plateau and were fortunate enough to watch a clan-god feast at Pangri. On our way from Pangri to Utnur we passed Marlavai and decided on this village as our future base-camp. Early [54] in February we went to the Kolapur Jatra, a great Gond feast and fair, held annually fifteen miles north-west of Utnur. From there we turned north and then east into Rajura Taluq, where we visited tht famous fort of Manikgarh, now deserted and overgrown by jungle. Camping in [126] various villages of the higher plateau we gathered piecemeal information from both Gonds and Kolams, and by the end of our tour realized that a study of the aboriginals of Adilabad might lead to the very heart of the Gond problem.

123 A slightly embarrassing circumstance during our first tour was the rapidly spreading rumour that I was a recruiting officer and had come to take young Gonds to the war. The general excitement following the Japanese invasion of Malaya, had reached even the Gonds and they interpreted my taking of notes and photographs as a preliminary selection of all the fittest men. And when at the same time the Director-General of Revenue visited Adilabad and Utnur, they took our tours for a concerted movement and thought the lorries with his camp-kit were meant to carry off the recruits. Many hid in the forest and the fields when we passed by and in the villages it was difficult to establish confidence.

But once settled in Marlavai in a house built in Gond style just outside the village, we were soon faced by a difficulty of exactly the opposite nature. For now rumour ran that I was a revenue officer, specially sent to the District to investigate the grievances of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods, and to give land to all those whom the influx of new settlers had rendered landless. All through the hot weather and the greater part of the rains aboriginals from all parts of the district, some in delegations of thirty and forty, flocked to Marlavai, all wanting their difficulties heard and remedied. Unable to give them any concrete assistance, I had at least to listen to their tales of woe, and many a day passed when the only anthropological information swelling my note-books was the distressingly monotonous account of a culture-contact resulting invariably in the expropriation and economic enslavement of the aboriginal.[1]

114 From March to the middle of December Marlavai was our headquarters, but several tours led us to the surrounding villages and ultimately to the Tilani area as far as Rompalli and Mangi. We left the district at Christmas and returned again early in March 1943, when we toured the taluqs of Both, Kinwat and Adilabad, reaching Marlavai in the middle of April. While in Hyderabad I had succeeded in obtaining the sanction of H.E.H. the Nizam's Government for a Gond Education

1. A full account of the conditions then prevailing in the Adilabad District is contained in my reports and diaries published under the title *Tribal Hyderabad* by the Revenue Department, Government of H.E.H. the Nizam, Hyderabad 1945.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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Scheme under which instruction in reading and writing Gondi and later Marathi and Urdu was to be provided for both children and adults. On my return to Marlavai we started work on a small scale with a school where adult Gonds were to be trained as teachers and village-officers. The work on this Scheme kept us in Marlavai until the end of January 1944, and it was there that most of the chapters contained in Book I were written. After an absence of five months in Assam, we returned in the rains for a short period and this gave me the opportunity of checking my Gondi texts with the help of the Headmaster of the Marlavai Training Centre Mr. S. B. Jogalkar and the Gond teachers, some of whom had meanwhile opened schools in their own villages.[1]

The division of the present work into two books was necessitated by its bulk and by the fact that a sudden opportunity for two expeditions into one of the least known tribal areas of the North-East Frontier prevented us from concentrating on the completion of the second part.

In the presentation of facts we have departed from the usual order of a straight monograph; instead of grouping them under such headings as material culture, agriculture, or religion, we have attempted an arrangement which, we hope, will give a better idea of Gond life as an organic entity. After the introductory chapters, which describe the physical and cultural environment, we have set a section outlining the mythical background of Gond culture and the cult of the clan-deities; for in this cult and the sacred myths lies the mainspring of the social order. Then follows a section describing the economic and ritual activities of a village community throughout the cycle of the year, and the three chapters of this section contain also most of the information on agriculture, the basis of Gond economics. Book II will open with an account of the phases of life, from childhood to death, and this will set the stage for a general discussion of the social organization and the principles of Gond religion, all details of ritual having been described already in their proper setting. The old feudal system looms still in the background of the social order, and I am attempting a reconstruction based on the existing remnants and local traditions contained mainly in the stories and songs of Pardhans. Read together with Wills' history of the Gond States of the Central Provinces this will perhaps give a certain idea of political and social life prevailing in Gondwana throughout the greater part of mediæval times.

The final chapters of the book will be concerned with the developments of the last fifty years, when increased contact with other populations broke up the Gonds' feudal organization and land-hungry immigrants drove many families from the lands where they had lived since the times of their ancestors. It is a dismal tale of the decline of a once proud and happy people, the loss of economic freedom, and the birth

[1] Cf. my article 'Aboriginal Education in Hyderabad.' *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. V, 1944.